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[“WE MUST KEEP UP APPEARANCES,” GEORGE SAID, “FOR THE SAKE OF THE FAMILY NAME.”]

## A PLAIN GIRL.

### CHAPTER XXXVIII.

AFTER the news recorded in the end of the last chapter we passed three long weeks of terrible anxiety, sometimes trembling at every ring lest it should be the fatal telegram; at others feeling more hopeful, and telling each other over and over again that all would be well yet.

It appeared that George had received his wound in the act of saving the life of a brother officer, whom a Pathan was about to cleave from the chin to the heel. “To the devotion and valour of Sir George Karslake,” said the papers, “Colonel MacGregor owes his life at this moment. The 29th Hussars may be justly proud of the gallantry of their comrade, who has thus prominently distinguished himself on more than one occasion.”

It was very gratifying to read little paragraphs like the above, and more gratifying still to hear good accounts of the patient—letters to me, not to his mother! Oh! how I

tore them open and devoured them! His brother officers wrote to me by every mail. One of the letters I append; it was one of the last I received, and ran as follows:—

“DEAR LADY KARSLAKE,—

“Before the mail dak goes out I must scribble you off a line, as I know you will still be anxious about the patient. I am glad to tell you that he is to be moved by dhooly—a kind of palanquin—by easy stages to the hills, and up at Murree he will receive every attention from his old friends, the Thorns—Dr. and Mrs. Thorn. No doubt he has often mentioned them. You need not be the least uneasy about him, as I know that Mrs. Thorn is a good all-round nurse, and takes a great interest in George, and he will be in excellent hands. His next move, of course, will be to England on medical certificate, and I am sure, as soon as he can, prudently do so, he will be all impatience to set his face homewards. The voyage will do him no end of good, not to speak of you at the end of it. I hear the corporal calling for letters, so conclude in great haste, with kind regards.

“Yours sincerely,

“EDGAR LYON.”

Part of this letter was very satisfactory and reassuring, but the latter part of it, with reference to Mrs. Thorn and her interest in George, was by no means so pleasant. I appeal to all young married women. Would not their hearts burn with fire and fury if they read a similar document, knowing what I knew with regard to Mrs. Thorn? Of course to poor, dear, simple Mrs. Karslake it was all most excellent, and she was truly thankful that her darling boy was about to fall into the hands of such true, good hands. As far as I was concerned I said nothing, but I had almost as soon he had fallen among thieves.

Now that George was reported convalescent, and Mrs. Thorn appeared to be mistress of the position, I fell back on my former attitude of sullen resentment, from which the cruel anxiety I had felt for George for weeks—weeks when I was in such a passion of despair and misery that the mere thought of his dying out there alone, far away from me, and taking such thoughts of me, as I knew he harboured, with him to the grave, nearly drove me beyond the bounds of sanity. But now, now that he was well, now that he



was basking in that woman's smiles—I always called her "that woman" when conversing with myself—now that he had laid his laurels at Mrs. Thorn's feet, it was a totally different affair.

He had once repudiated me; I secretly repudiated him. Not one line had he penned to me, and he might have guessed at my devouring fears; not even a word in pencil of enmity or forgiveness when he lay, as he and everyone around him believed, within a hair's breadth of the jaws of death.

Each mail as it now came in brought letters from him to his mother. She had no secrets from me now. I saw them, and surreptitiously read them over and over again. I studied his feeble pencil scrawl, then his feeble attempt with ink, finally his ordinary bold, black calligraphy. There was never one word of Mrs. Thorn. He spoke in a vague, general sense of "kind friends" and "good Samaritans;" and this reticence, this studied silence, I looked upon as a bad—nay, a fatal indication.

By the end of May he wrote that he was quite restored and was coming home, but that his mother must not be frightened to see a very ghastly and emaciated object. He wished to join her at Karlake in June; and it seems scarcely credible, but it is quite true, that in all these letters there was not a single allusion to me, and but few to the child.

"You must not mind him, Nellie," said the old lady as I once handed her back a letter, and I suppose she saw a suspicion of tears in my eyes. "These Karlakes—you and I are not real Karlakes by birth—have all very queer tempers. They are themselves the soul of generosity and honour; but once they take an idea into their head it's very hard to drive it out. Your own son will be the same."

"Small comfort to me in that," I said, sharply.

"But they have very good qualities. They are as constant as the sun—another form of obstinacy. Nothing ever weans a Karlake from his first love."

"Mrs. Sharp—Miss Norton—was George's first love," I said, triumphantly, feeling that I had caught the old lady in her own net.

"No, no," very eagerly. "I know it better than you do. He would have been a miserable man, married to that shallow, vain, malicious little creature! You see I have my eyes about me. She was only a passing fancy. She took his eye because she was such a contrast to himself, so very helpless. That was assumed, and so very languishing and so fair—that was assumed."

"Yes, certainly," I assented. "Milk of roses and the last thing in orange hair dye."

"Miranda won't hear a word against her, though," said the old lady, lowering her voice to a whisper, as if she feared that her daughter was listening, but it's a long way to Cairo.

"True," I remarked, very impressively; "but you and I know that Miranda is carried away by impulse, and is neither prudent nor wise!"

It was the middle of July before George came home. We had expected him several times, but in the end he took us quite unawares. I had been doubtful about staying at Karlake when he was to be there. I was independent now, in every sense of the word. I had my own house in Park-lane, my own servants, my own carriages. Why should I stay? I longed to see George, and yet I dreaded meeting him. Our attitude to each other for the future was to be so strange. It was not difficult to maintain an armed peace when divided by six thousand miles of sea and land, but it would not be so easy under the same roof. I hinted my idea of moving back to town to Mrs. Karlake, but at the very first breath of my suggestion she cast up her hands and her eyes and said that "it was out of the question. Was I mad. I must study appearances. If we had been humble folk it would not have been so imperative, but now there was George's position in the county as a landowner and representative of such an old family. I was a marked woman, thanks to

my wealth. Yes, and my looks, she added. Then there was the child to be thought of. What would people say if George's return was the signal for my leaving his house?"

"They may say what they please," I said, defiantly.

"No my dear, they may not. You cannot afford to cut Mrs. Grundy or to flout public opinion; and besides this, I'm sure that you and George will make it up. He is very fond of you."

"Oh, very!" I assented, sarcastically.

"He is, I am sure," she proceeded, with increased animation.

"Very well, grandmother, I'll take your word for it!" I replied, bitterly.

"And besides, my dear, in letting the full light of public opinion in upon you and George's affairs, by living about and alone, you will be the sufferer—he will not. In these cases it's the woman who gets all the suspicion and the man the sympathy—no matter which of them is in the wrong—so be guided by an old woman and stay."

Miranda had returned to town in time to welcome her brother. She was more guarded and more civil, but stray little snarls showed me how the wind blew, and she hated me secretly, more bitterly, than ever.

As I have said previously, George came home in the end quite unexpectedly. I was out when he arrived. I had taken Moss, and baby, now aged one year and four months, and no longer a baby, but a young gentleman who could walk, and who could sing things out taken by the slight effort of standing on tip-toes.

I had taken him for a moon-long country drive after his dinner. I had a very pretty phaeton and pair of cobs of my own, and drove up to the door about five o'clock, in time for George's family tea. The cobs were hot, and I stood for a moment giving directions to the groom to walk them about, and then I ran up the steps, and passed into the nice, dim, cool hall. I thought that Vokes looked at me rather curiously—in a kind of semi-paternal manner, but I never dreamt of it being due to anything out of the common. By one instant's reckoning, George, not having come home in the *Rover*, was not due now for another week.

"Where is Mrs. Karlake?" I was going to say, but I knew it was a silly question.

She was bound to be buried in the comfort chair in the drawing-room—a novel on her knee, and a fan in her hand—declaring that "it was the hottest afternoon she had ever known." She made this statement on an average, three times a week during the summer.

I opened the door and went in, taking off my hat as I did so. It was a large, long room, with a big window and pillars at the far end, as well as three windows on the left hand as you entered. All the striped blinds were down; ferns and exotic plants in pots gave a green look to the *tout ensemble*. Mrs. Karlake was sitting facing me, and Miranda was standing up, in the act, I fancy, of leaving the room.

"How nice and cool you are in here! I—" the rest of the sentence died away on my tongue, as I noticed the back of a man's head just above one of the two wicker chairs.

It was the head of a young man with dark hair. I had a strange, queer feeling in my eyes and throat. Could it be George? Yes it was. He turned half round as he heard my voice, and slowly stood up.

"You see he has taken us quite by surprise, after all," said his mother, beaming on him with delight. "He came just after you went out. He came by the *Ravena*. We never thought of that."

I had a kind of hysterical desire to laugh at this, as if Mrs. Karlake was introducing me to George for the first time. I looked at him; we had not met for nearly two years—not since that terrible interview in that pretty little drawing-room at Sandgate. Since then, how much had happened! It all flashed through my mind in the instant, as they say

one's whole life is presented to a drowning person.

George and I were now a father and mother. There was that change in our state since we had parted.

He was a soldier who had won his laurels, and made his name, not in any feather-bed fashion, but where hard knocks were being dealt and taken. I, on my part, was promoted to the very considerable status of a great heiress.

George did not look either ghastly or emaciated; he was thin and tanned, certainly, and had an older, graver, more concentrated expression. He wore his right arm in a sling. As he stood up to meet me he did not advance, but remained just in the same spot. It was for me to accost him, presumably, so I came forward, and held out my hand—was not Miranda watching me!—and said,—

"I am glad to see you, George. I hope you are better," my voice shook a little.

He took my offered fingers for a moment in his left hand, and then dropped them. He did not say anything. It was not at all a reassuring reception. I felt very pale—if one can really feel such a thing—called to the married of one's house; and I saw my reflection in an opposite mirror. My face was really the colour of my dress (white).

"We must have baby down at once, Ellen," said Mrs. Karlake, eagerly—Miranda had now left the room. "I'm dying to show him to George."

"Yes," I assented, faintly, snatching at the opportunity of making my exit. "I will go and send him down now." So saying I followed my sister-in-law's example.

I had some difficulty in keeping the tears back from my eyes as I gave the requisite message to Moss, and it was with an almost supernatural effort that I commanded my voice and tried to speak in my usual tone, and I said, calmly, the necessary,—

"Sir George has arrived, Moss. Take off George's palette, and put on his blue suit, and take him down to the drawing-room as quickly as you can."

"Won't you take him yourself, my lady?"

But I dared not to have heard this suggestion, as I went into my own room, which was opposite, and shut and looked at the door, and shivering myself into a chair, indulged in the luxury of a thoroughly good cry.

I sobbed me inexhaustibly; but, half an hour later, when my long-drawn sobs were dried, and my tears had ceased to flow, I went over to the dressing-table and looked into the glass, and what a sight was that!

My eyes sunken, with crimson rims; my face pale, but with red patches on it here and there.

I could not possibly appear in such a condition—no, not for hours! Besides, I was not wanted.

George had his mother and his sister and a new relation—his son.

I sat near the window, which was open, and watched the family party slowly strolling across the grass towards a bench under the beeches.

How angry I felt with myself for the feeling that in my heart of hearts I thought there was no one like George still. I must get all that rooted out.

I had seen in his eyes nothing but a look as rude, and as politely critical, as if I were some young lady he had beheld for the first time; and I—poor fool!—for the smallest encouragement, would have thrown my arms round his neck and kissed him, and, as far as I was concerned, by-gones would have been by-gones; but he was as hard, and as wedded to his own hateful suspicions, as ever.

"Then so be it!" I said.

Hitherto I have been the docile victim of circumstances, and my own folly, in yielding and admitting his right to try, and judge, and condemn me.

I had adopted a new rôle with Miranda, and had carried it out with success. I would play a new part with George, and see how he would



like it. He should not give all the knocks that were going; and people who set out by being too humble in domestic matters would end in being treated as slaves.

I intended to appear at dinner, and to do this with any success I must get rid of my red eyes. I bathed them with cold water, and then with eau-de-cologne; all the same, they would keep filling as I thought of how Mrs. Karlslake, and not me, had had all the pleasure, all the honour, of showing off little George to his father, a pleasure and privilege that by rights was mine.

Presently Moss came and knocked at my door.

I was waiting to hear what she had to say, and what had been the effect of his introduction to his other parent; but then, my eyes! what tales they would tell! I must wait.

So I flung myself on my bed, and said, in a moaned voice,—

"I have a headache; I can't talk to you now, Moss."

So Moss had to go away.

By the time the second song went at eight o'clock, I joined the party in the drawing-room.

I think my face looked as usual. I had taken great pains with my dress, which was a high, very soft, cream silk, trimmed with quantities of lace—a very pretty home-dinner dress.

I was thankful I had worn it once or twice before, so that Miranda would not exclaim "that I had put on a new dress for George."—Miranda, who knew so little, and who now would guess so much.

George took his mother in, Miranda and I followed, arm-in-arm, as if we were the most affectionate of sisters, I knowing so well the rancorous hatred she bore me.

I sat at the head, George at the foot, just as in old days, at Sandgate—older, and far happier times—though then we had not these powdered servants-in-waiting, and a table laden with massive plate, and a dinner laid before us fit to tempt a prince.

Mrs. Karlslake did most of the talking. Miranda, too, was unusually loquacious, and told her brother in a tone of playful command that he must fill the house, and give a lot of entertainments; that every one expected it of him.

"We have been as dull as ditch-water the last two years!"

George said he was very sorry to hear that, and he must try and improve on such a state of affairs.

Mrs. Karlslake talked nervously and incessantly. She was resolved that she would not leave any awful pauses, nor give people time to notice that George and I never spoke to one another.

He did address me once *apropos* of grapes.

"May I give you some grapes?"

To this I simply bent my head. I think he looked a little surprised at the calm dignity of my assent. When the servants had retired Mrs. Karlslake said,—

"He is charmed with little George, Ellen," speaking as if she was a kind of interpreter. "He had no idea that he was not in long clothes. Of course he has no experience. He says he is big enough for a pony."

I made no reply whatever. I did not even look up, which, I suppose, was rude, but went on pretending to eat my grapes.

After one or two long gaps between George's account of his passage home and a few details of the war, we got up, and filed out one by one.

Whilst he held the door open with his left arm he looked at me hard. I could feel it, but I kept my head studiously turned away. What the evening was like I know not, for I did not appear.

The next day we had a solemn breakfast. My silence was oppressive. I did not speak to any one excepting little George, who came in, and toddled round the table, and seemed to be very much taken with his father.

Mrs. Karlslake did say a few words to me

and I to her, but she was absorbed in her son, in cutting up his meat, and being a real mother to him; and Miranda was buried in her thoughts, and was unusually silent.

I think, perhaps, George regretted his reception of me a little, and was disposed to hold out the tip of his sceptre, for he spoke to me in a general way once or twice; but I affected not to take the remark to myself, and made no replies.

After dinner I again escaped, and, as it was a very hot evening, I went out into the grounds.

It was a lovely warm summer night, the air was delicious, and loaded with the perfume of syringa—no wrap necessary.

I wandered about, not feeling very exhilarated, all the same; sniffing roses, and burying my face in stalks of sweet pea, and asking myself how it was all going to end, and would it not be best to go away to my own home in Park-lane, and have my cousin Maggie over to stay with me?

I went and sat down on a garden bench and thought this matter over. I was no longer a black sheep at the castle, for my father had not only written to but actually seen uncle before he crossed the Atlantic.

Yes, I really thought that my plan would be the best, and far the pleasantest for all parties.

What was the use of pretending this lie? Besides, I was not now dependent. At this moment my thoughts were interrupted by a voice behind me saying,—

"Are you not afraid of catching cold?"

It was George—George who, strolling alone over the tennis-ground behind me, cigar in mouth, had accidentally discovered my retreat.

He came round the seat, and looked at me and I at him. He sat down at the other corner, and I immediately rose to depart.

"Don't go," he said; "I've something to say to you," coolly knocking the ashes off his cigar as he spoke.

I stayed, but I said nothing.

"You know we can't go on like this," expressively.

I bowed my head very gravely. I knew that he did not like my silent mode of assent.

"We can't go on, you know, sitting at our own table like two dummies. Of course, it's a bore; but we must study the servants."

"Study the servants!" I exclaimed at last, and I laughed with irrepressible mockery.

"You know what I'm thinking of—appearances," he said, angrily.

This mocking laugh of mine had touched him acutely.

"We must keep up appearances for the sake of the family name."

"Bother the family name!" I cried, contemptuously, sitting down as I spoke; "you mean your own good name and the child's."

"My own good name! Thank you very much, for your anxiety is in very good case. No one ever threw a slur on it but yourself; and as to the child, I fancy his good name is not in any present danger. Ellen," he said, and there was a sudden light in his eyes, "can you—dare you jest at such a thing as the secret that lies between us—that has parted our lives?"

"Do you believe in it still?" I asked, now standing up and looking towards him with dilated eyes and trembling lips.

"I've seen nothing to alter the case," he said, "no, nothing. When I looked back memory—the memory of one day is too ghastly a companion."

"I was a foolish little goose in those days," I said, folding my arms and surveying him. "I was afraid of you then; I am not now, and I am glad to have an opportunity of saying so!"

I paused and looked at him with a smile, and he gazed back at me with an expression of angry astonishment, and threw away his unfinished cigar.

"Please listen to what I am going to say," I went on. "It is my turn this time. I was

so unhinged then by the failure of my plot, by my awful interview with that wretched man, and the still worse one with you, that my very wits left me."

"I could not find presence of mind to defend myself. I should have brought my father, and made him tell you all, but instead I sank down resistless, crushed."

"I gave in, and accepted your verdict as if I were really guilty. This was most unfair to myself, I now see."

"For a long time I lived like some wretched creature doing penance in your mother's house."

"I gave up all my friends—everything," opening my hands as I spoke; "but there is an end of that. I am rich, I am my very own mistress; I have tolerated your tyranny too long."

"I stayed here to receive you, to please your mother; but the reception you accorded me scarcely repaid my delay. I shall put off my journey no longer. I shall go away to my own home, and leave you to reign undisputed in yours."

"Why should we trouble to throw dust in the eyes of the world? The discomfort to ourselves is not worth it."

I paused, and made my query in a tone of curt decision.

"Ellen, this is all nonsense. You are talking as if you were not married to me at all—as if you could go and come as you pleased," staring at the startling phenomena of a wife broken loose.

"So I can," I interrupted; "and as to my being married to you, we have sundered that bond by mutual consent—you on your part two years ago, I on mine now."

"Nevertheless, you are still my wife in the eyes of the world, and I shall hold you to that outward form," he replied, with increased irritation.

"For what reason?" I asked, with a sneer. "My fortune?"

"No. Spare your gibes; you don't believe in them yourself; but this bandying of bitter speeches is bad. This, even on the ground of common politeness, is no way for you to speak to me, nor I to you. The real reason is, as you may guess, the child."

"Really!" shrugging my shoulders. "It certainly never would have struck me that you took such an interest in him hitherto."

"I often heard of him from my mother," he began.

"And no doubt cursed the day that he was born!" I interrupted.

"Ellen!" in a tone of angry reproach.

"Don't call me Ellen, please; I hate the name. If you must call me something call me Lady Karlslake. But, pray, do not be anxious about the child. I am a better mother than you might think. I shall take him to town with me."

"No, no, you will not!" with stern decision.

"The idea of taking a child to London now! Why even I know that that would not be fit for him. You, I suppose you won't care to leave him behind? In fact, I think, for the present, you had far better stay. I shall fill the house for the shooting in August. You might ask over your cousin Maggie."

"Why?" I inquired, sharply; "to see the agreeable domestic picture?"

"No. In fact, there's no harm in telling you Jervis is coming; and, besides being a great friend of mine, he is a great friend of hers. In fact—in short—" hesitating and floundering about.

"In fact—in short, you want to give a lame dog a lift over a style, to 'make the match,' as they call it in Ireland; but, at the same time, I should have fancied that you would have been the last to lend yourself to such nonsense as love and marriage."

"Nonsense?"

"Yes, it comes to the same thing in the end. Look at us," pointing my finger to him, and then to myself. "Were we not in love, and did we not get married? Observe us now! How we detest and despise each other!"

Why decoy other people into the same plight?"

"Detest—despise! These are strong words. I'm not aware that I have ever given you reason to detest, much less despise me; but I'd rather, if I may have my choice, have a double dose of the former than any of the latter."

I could see that, much as he might like to despise me, I was not to think meanly of him. The idea stung him sharply.

"I have good reason for what I say. Did you not desert me? Have you noticed me for two long years, not even when the child was born? And there are other things."

I paused.

"The dew is falling heavily, and you really must go in; but before you go I want to come to an understanding with you. As long as you are here, for your sake and my sake, let it be a truce. I mean let us conduct ourselves as if we were like other people. Do not let it be said, now that I have just come home from the wars, that Sir George and Lady Karlake had a cat-and-dog life. I am all for peace. I don't care for domestic campaigns."

"Peace at any price! Don't you think that our truce, such as you would have it, savours of hypocrisy? Will it not be better and honest each to go our own way and not speak?"

"No, I don't think so; and speech will be a relief to your feelings. Sometimes, you know," with a strange smile, "you can despise and detest me all the same. Now let us go in."

"What, together?"

"Yes; why not?"

"I suppose it is one of the duties we owe the servants," I said; "but I accept your truce," walking beside him across the grass. "It will be better than sitting in sulky silence. London is too hot just now;" and then, speaking as if to an acquaintance, "Do you not feel the country a nice, cool, green relief after India—horrible hot India?"

"Yes, but India is not horrible to me. I like it. I would go back to-morrow if I could," looking straight before him. What a nice profile he had!

"Why?" I asked, with assumed indifference.

"Because the fighting is not half over yet, and it's very hard here on me to be invalidated with this confounded arm of mine. After a campaign I don't feel as if I could stand the dull monotony of common life. I like to hear the roar of cannon and the charging of squadrons."

I stared at George as he said this. There was a look of suppressed enthusiasm on his face, though half turned away, that made me for the first time understand why he had been called a hero, a brilliant cavalry soldier, who did not scruple to carry his life in his hand.

"And have you no other reason for wishing to return to India, say to-morrow?" I proceeded in an insinuating voice.

He hesitated for a moment, and then said,—

"I have many friends."

I felt a desperate desire to say something that would surprise him, and as we slowly walked up the marble steps from the pleasure ground I made up my mind as to what I would say.

"Yes," pausing at the top, and looking at him with a smile (a forced smile, of course), "I am sure you have many friends, and one among them who is a host in herself. Do you not wish that you might return to-morrow to Mrs. Thorn?"

I fancy that my remark was an illumination for him. He changed countenance visibly. "Ah, ah!" I said to myself, I had scored this time.

"You see, my dear George," I whispered, ere I left him, "that, at any rate, I have a Roland for your Oliver. All the same, we will keep our truce."

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

WHEN I had launched my missile, recorded in the end of the last chapter, I fled precipitately, and did not reappear till breakfast time next morning.

George and I now talked across the table to one another—rather distant, timid kind of conversation—but it was sufficient for appearances, sufficient for Miranda, and ten times better than dead silence.

I could see that he was very anxious to have a few words with me alone, but I skilfully evaded all *tête-à-têtes* in a manner that I have no doubt exasperated him; but one morning, being the earliest in the breakfast room and I next, I was fairly caught. He was reading the paper as I came in, and quickly putting it down, and with a nervous look to make sure that we were alone, he said, in a would-be off-hand manner,—

"By-the-way, I particularly wished to ask you what you meant the other night about a lady you named Mrs. Thorn?"

"I meant what I implied," I returned, taking up my letters quite coolly, "that you were very fond of her; in fact, are, by all accounts."

"Ellen, take care what you say," growing visibly paler.

"Oh," carelessly, "I know very well what I am talking about; and do, for mercy sake, remember that I detest the name of Ellen."

"I won't have this trifling," he said, throwing down the paper, which he had still held in his left hand. "What do you mean by talking of a Roland for an Oliver? What do you dare to insinuate about Mrs. Thorn?"

"Pooh!" I cried, stepping back a pace.

"Pray don't lose your temper over it. Do not imagine that I am jealous (this was a wicked lie on my part), or that I am going to play Eleanor to her Roamond, but I should just like you to know that I am quite aware of your little peccadilloes."

"You are driving me stark staring mad! Oblige me by stating what you have heard, what vile station gossip has filtered to your ears?"

"No more to mine than to every woman's in the Presidency. Two people volunteered to inform me that you and the lady were the—shall we say—amusement of Murree!"

"And you believed them?" he demanded, fiercely.

"Certainly," with a shrug. "Why not? You believed worse things of me."

"But then I had the testimony of my own eyes."

"And I have had the advantage of other people's; but it is not of much consequence, considering the terms on which we live—perfect mutual freedom. I select my friends, you yours. Is not that correct?"

"Mrs. Thorn certainly was a friend of mine," he began, slowly, "and I would have thought that the great kindness she showed to me when I was so ill would have given her a claim on you."

"On me!" with a gesture of repudiation. "Oh, dear, no! That has nothing to do with me now."

I was acting abominably; but I was resolved to be merciless, and let him taste a little of what had been my portion for so long.

His face fell as I made this remark. He was hurt, I could see; but why should he hug himself with the idea that I was fond of him still? I certainly would not give him that comfort.

"She was very unhappy in her home, and I pitied her."

"Oh, of course! We all know what pity precedes."

"One would never know you again—you are so hard, so bitter, and so cynical," he exclaimed, in a tone of angry amazement.

"Probably not; but I think the change is for the better. She is pretty, is she not? And a great flirt, and likes the cavalry?"

"I shall tell you nothing about her, except-

ing that she is no more to me than that tawny, and I consider your remarks an insult to me and to yourself."

"Oh, that's nonsense! But that is how a man always finishes up an argument—getting into a rage."

Here the door opened, and little George was, as it were, set down, and let loose in the room. Big George's scowl vanished as the small mite toddled up to him, and tried to climb up on his knee; but George was unused to children, and, besides, he had only the use of his left arm; so after a futile endeavour, which ended in his sling being pulled off over his head, he gave up the attempt.

I stood looking on in silence, and then I had compunction. I had had the best of the late battle, and I came over, and, I'm sure very much to George's surprise, stooped down and picked up the black silk sling, and put it over his head. His arm I could see was quite useless, far worse than I had had any idea of. I did this as gently and as deftly as I could, and then I lifted up the child and placed him on his knee, little George making another eager grab at the wounded arm, which had greatly attracted his attention.

"You must not touch that, Georgie," I said, shaking my head gravely. "Is it very painful?" to his father.

"No, not very. A splintered forearm—a bullet."

"And the wound in your head?" looking critically at his thick dark locks.

"Never mind my scars. I wonder if the mater is aware that it's nearly ten o'clock. We may as well begin."

"I suppose so," feeling rebuffed, and perhaps deservedly so, and now moving away to my place opposite the tea-tray just as Mrs. Karlake, with many apologies, came into the room.

Miranda followed ten minutes later without the slightest excuse, for Miranda had a rooted idea that we should never commence any meal till it was her sovereign convenience to be present.

George's arm was very painful in spite of his disclaimers, and it was decided that he and his mother should go to town for a few days, leaving Miranda *tête-à-tête* with me; but not for long, for the day after their departure I had the great pleasure of meeting my dear Maggie at Allbridge Station.

How I laughed and wept over her as I took her home in the brougham, and how ceaselessly we did talk, and how much we had to say! She was immensely struck with Karlake as it came in view, and also with the heir of that ilk, whom we picked up as he was walking with Moss in the avenue.

"You ought to be a happy girl if ever there was one, Nell!" she said, as she sat down in my luxurious bedroom before the glass, and I had the handling once more of her thick tresses as in days of yore.

"Yes, I ought to be," I replied, evasively.

"I know," she went on, looking at my face, which was visible over hers in the big mirror, "that you and George had a little difference once, and papa was not pleased with you, and very angry when he found out where the piano, and books, and pony-carriage came from, but he has quite, quite got over that; indeed, he thinks more of you than ever, and so he ought. You have been so good to us, darling—"

"Not half as good as I would like to be if you would let me," I interrupted.

"Oh! Nellie, we really are ashamed as it is; and about George, how glad you must have been to have him back, and so distinguished, too! Is he as good-looking as ever?"

"You will see for yourself; he comes home on Saturday."

"I suppose, Nell," looking at me rather anxiously, "that all married people have their little storms in teacups?"

"I suppose so," I returned, rather grimly. (storm in a teacup, indeed!)

"Oh! mercy," she screamed, "you are



dragging my hair out by the roots. What are you thinking of, Nell?"

"I'm sure I'm awfully sorry; it was quite unintentional, and as a salve to your poor head I'm going to tell you some nice news. Who do you think is coming here on Friday, and you and I will have to entertain him all alone?"

She guessed at once, for she blushed rosy red up to the very roots of the hair that I was so tastefully arranging.

"Not Captain Jervis?" half doubtfully.

"Why not Captain Jervis—don't you like him?"

"Yes, oh! yes; he is very nice. Don't you?"

I assented most promptly; but, query, did he like me? What did he think of me? He had been with George on that most fatal evening, and he had seen me stealing down those hateful stairs. Surely my evil genius had alone tempted me to ascend them.

"A Colonel Moon is coming too. He is for Miranda; that is to say," correcting myself, "he is asked for the shooting, and because he is an old friend of George's, and Miranda likes him; but if he marries her, and thus relieves us of her society, I shall pity him from my heart, and be his sympathetic friend for life."

"You don't like her?" she asked, in an awe-struck voice.

"No, my dear, I don't. Oh! your poor hair. A thousand pardons. There now, get up; you look lovely!"

"Ah! Nellie, you know you are only giving me a bit of the blarney. I never was more than nice-looking, and only that when I'm really well dressed. Now you—you—really are even prettier than ever," kissing me enthusiastically.

"Looks count for nothing once one is married," I said, lightly.

"Oh! Nellie, you know you don't think so; George does not think so. How proud he was of you at Sandgate that summer!"

"Proud of me! Oh! very," with hidden meaning.

"And I'm sure," she proceeded, innocently, "he thinks there is no one in Great Britain can hold a candle to you in the way of looks, and that there is no one so nice in all the world."

"Perhaps," I said, undoing my own long hair, preparatory to twisting it up; "and now let us talk of someone else. Tell me some more about Jane and Mary."

(To be continued.)

True friendship increases as life's end approaches, just as the shadows lengthen every degree the sun declines toward setting.

**EXAMINING HIVES.**—All hives intended for stock should now be thoroughly overhauled, and their true state ascertained. Where they are light, feeding should not be delayed a single day. Combs that show traces of foul-brood should be consigned to the melting-pot after the honey has been separated, and kept out of bees' way, because it is catching and causes robbing. Queens that are not prolific, or that are laying abnormally, through defect of the fertilising organs, should be removed, and healthy, young, and fertile queens put in their place. Bees that are taken from infected hives should undergo a quarantine of forty-eight hours in an empty hive, before being fed in their permanent one, which should either be a clean one or one that has been thoroughly disinfected. Robbing should be guarded against. A single drop of honey or syrup left exposed will sometimes cause fighting and robbing to the entire ruin of the whole apiaries. Where hives are attacked, entrance should be reduced to the widening of one bee. If that is not sufficient, close it up and ventilate, giving it a flight after the other hives are at rest, or remove it some miles distant until robbing has ceased.—*Agricultural Gazette.*

## GO TO THE FRONT.

DEAREST child, if sorrow's legions  
Press thee, even to the hilt;  
If upon thy field of battle  
Tears and blood seem vainly spilt,  
At the rear thou shalt not linger—  
In the van go bear the blunt;  
They who feel the pulse of battle  
Must go boldly to the front.

And if poverty assail thee,  
Do not fear his spectre band;  
For, if thy own heart don't fail thee,  
He will flee before thy hand.  
At the rear thou shalt not linger,  
There thy weapons will be blunt;  
Victory is with the van guard,  
So go boldly to the front.

If an enemy should slander,  
If a friend should do thee wrong,  
Do not fear to face injustice,  
For the right is always strong.  
At the rear thou shalt not linger;  
For, when evil is to hunt  
See thy arms are sharp and stainless,  
Then go boldly to the front.

From the soldiers come the victors;  
Out of danger heroes spring;  
And thy hours of care and sorrow  
Opportunities will bring.  
At the rear thou shalt not linger;  
For thy place is in the front  
With the leaders of the battle,  
With the men who bear the brunt.

'Tis not rank, nor gold, nor fortune—  
Give to any man a prize;  
They are noble who live nobly,  
All the "rank" are brave and wise.  
At the rear the "file" may linger,  
With their weapons dull and blunt  
But thy place is in the vanguard—  
So go boldly to the front.

L. B.

## WANTED AN HEIRESS.

—:—:—

### CHAPTER XXX.—(continued.)

He was cramming one of Vincent's handkerchiefs that had lain in the chair into his pocket, believing it to be his own. Vincent noticed this, but refrained from pointing out the mistake made, lest it should add to his savage temper.

"Did you ring, sir?"

The inquiry came from Mrs. Larkspur. She stood at the door noting Richard's flushed, angry face and aggressive bearing, in such marked contrast to his brother's quiet bearing.

"No, Mrs. Larkspur, I have not rung."

"Thank you, sir; it must have been my fancy," said the landlady, closing the door, and going away again.

She knew quite well that her lodger had not rung, but the sound of high words had excited her curiosity, and led her to invent an errand to the sitting-room to ascertain what was going on there between the brothers.

"I shouldn't wonder if it's about a young lady," thought the good woman. "They've never quarrelled before to my knowledge. It's to be hoped she hasn't taken a fancy to Mr. Richard. I can't abide that man. His looks are enough to sour the milk at the best of times."

Richard caught up his hat, and bestowed a parting kick upon Jack, who happened to be in his way. The dog would have flown at him but for Vincent's intervention. As it was he retreated to the farthest corner of the room, growling furiously, while pass jumped on to the bookcase, and swore at Richard from that safe elevation. He was not a favourite with the menagerie, his harsh,

crabbed nature prejudicing both dumb things and humanity in general against him.

"Shake hands, Dick, before you go, and don't let us part bad friends for the first time in our lives," said Vincent, conscious that Richard's anger was not altogether without foundation.

"The man who allows a pink-and-white face to come between him and the purpose of a lifetime can be no friend of mine," rejoined the barrister, ignoring the outstretched hand. "After this occurrence we are not likely to see much of each other, or to meet on the old terms. I have paid my last visit to you. Good-night."

His last visit! Are men sometimes permitted to foreshadow their own destiny? to play the oracle, uttering words concerning themselves of which they know not the full meaning?

He flung himself from the room, and Vincent heard the door close violently behind him as he went out into the solemn, tranquil night, his thoughts bent upon his meditated vengeance, the shadow of a nameless deed already falling darkly around him.

Vincent sat by the fireside absorbed in anxious, conflicting thought, in no wise resembling his brother's, save in the strong feeling it awakened, and the impetus it gave to all his mental powers.

The cat came down from the bookcase, and purred round him; the dog licked his hand, but for once they met with no friendly response. Their master's reverie was too deep to admit of his heeding them.

How best to save Gwendoline Massey from sorrow and reflected disgrace in the brief space of time at his disposal was the subject uppermost in his mind.

Merely to abstain from taking any part in the prosecution of her father would do her little or no good. It would be a negative act, betokening neither enmity nor strong friendly feeling, incapable of lessening the pain she would be called upon to endure when once her father had become a prisoner, and the world at large was eagerly discussing his crime.

Richard would doubtless set that great engine, the law, working on the next morning, giving it no peace till it had accomplished his end, and effected Percival Massey's ruin.

By prompt action and timely warning alone could the financier's escape and Gwendoline's immunity from suffering be connived at. The subsequent exposure Vincent knew that he was powerless to avert. He could only urge him to avoid imprisonment by instant flight, while acquainting him with what was to take place on the morrow under Richard's direction.

But this would involve playing the traitor to his brother, and assuming a complete indifference to the cruel wrong sustained by their father. No longer living to assert his own innocence, to whom should that sacred task belong if not to his sons?

The doctor shrank from the idea of betraying Richard's confidence, and hindering him in the work upon which, not very long ago, they had both been engaged. It was hateful to him in the extreme. On the other hand, if he decided to remain silent Percival Massey would occupy a felon's cell, and Gwendoline—he dared not think what her fate would be like in that case.

His love for her, and his reluctance to aid the man who had ruined his father fought within him for the victory.

"I cannot do it," he exclaimed, aloud, in his perplexity. "The fate in store for him is a just one. Why should I strive to avert it for the sake of his daughter?"

Even as he uttered these words Gwendoline's agonised and pleading eyes seemed to rise between him and the glowing coals.

He started up, and going to the window drew aside the blind.

The rain had ceased, and the moon was shining brightly in a cloudless sky.

"Choose ye between the living and the dead," he murmured; to himself, in a low,

steadfast tone; "the dead are at rest, but the living have still hearts to be broken, and long years that a few words may render either sad or happy to look forward to. That being the case are not their claims upon us the first to be considered? Gwendoline, dear love, I cannot stand idly by aware of what is to befall you on the morrow without endeavouring to save you from it. Right or wrong I will see your father to-night, and warn him of the coming justice."

### CHAPTER XXXI.

PERCIVAL MASSEY and his household had retired to rest when Vincent reached the Laurels. Nevertheless, when a sleepy servant carried the doctor's card to his master the latter, on reading the few words written in pencil on the margin, immediately granted him an audience in his private room.

It was not unusual for letters and telegrams to find their way to the Laurels at unholly hours from some of the financier's many agents and correspondents. Late visitors were less frequent, but not altogether unknown. Consequently Vincent's arrival did not much astonish the domestic who let him in. It interested Jeames a great deal more to wonder how long he was likely to remain, keeping that injured young man from his warm bed for the purpose of letting him out.

Before entering the room Percival Massey knew that his doom was sealed. Vengeance, sure if tardy, had tracked his footsteps, and set at naught each careful effort he had made to conceal his guilt.

The long years of luxurious ease and successful enterprise that he had enjoyed since committing his crime seemed as if they had never existed now that he was about to suffer the deferred penalty.

Conscious that in Vincent Eyre he had come face to face with his accuser, he was unprepared for what followed—namely, the invitation to make good his escape before Richard's advent in the morning, and the absence on Vincent's part of any desire for a public prosecution.

The interview between the two men was a short one.

Vincent, in the fewest possible words, acquainted the financier with Sandy Macnab's dying confession, and the line of action his brother intended to adopt in dealing with the individual accused.

Comment would have been superfluous. Neither Vincent nor Percival Massey attempted to discuss the crime thus brought to light. The bare mention of it sufficed.

The one uttered no useless reproaches; the other did not seek to palliate the heinousness of his conduct. The trust abused, the funds appropriated, the suspicion and reproach purposely directed against an innocent man were not enlarged upon.

Both tacitly acknowledged by their silence the exceptional nature of the wrong committed, placing it beyond the reach of palliation or normal censure.

Not to man, but to Heaven and to his own conscience must Percival Massey answer for it, supposing him to escape an earthly tribunal, through the timely warning of one from whom he had the least reason to expect mercy.

Only a quarter of an hour had elapsed by the clock, yet, in that short space of time, the financier had grown older, grayer, less erect and stately. Morally and physically the blow had crushed him.

His proud position, the gigantic speculations in his name then pending throughout Europe, the esteem of men that he valued so highly, all must be swept away. Even if he escaped imprisonment through the agency of the man whose father he had ruined he must be content to pass the remainder of his existence in a foreign land under an assumed name.

If his crime were great the long-delayed punishment fully equalled it.

Attempting to falter out a few broken words expressing gratitude for the leniency evinced,

the cause of which he shrewdly suspected, Vincent promptly checked him.

"You owe me no thanks," he said, sternly. "But for your daughter I should have made no effort to save you from the fate you merit. It is for her sake that I have played the traitor to my brother, and gone against his interests and my own to enable you to escape. I cannot justify my conduct even to myself. My desire to shield her from the lasting grief and humiliation that your arrest must needs entail upon her has distanced every other consideration. Thank her for this warning if it enables you to reach a place of safety, not me."

"You love her," replied Percival Massey, his thin white hand beating a nervous tattoo upon the table. "You once asked her to become your wife?"

"Yes, I would have married her even had I been aware of her father's antecedents. It was not to be, and yet, so deep was the love she awakened, that her happiness and her future welfare are still paramount with me."

Percival Massey groaned.

"And she refused you for a man who has since proved unworthy of her!" he exclaimed, involuntarily.

"Are you alluding to Mr. Joscelynn?" asked Vincent, a tremor of intense interest in his voice.

"Yes, they were to have been married, but facts transpired that effectually put a stop to the engagement. He had been acting a part and deceiving us as to his income and previous connections from beginning to end. One after another my most cherished plans fell to the ground as if a curse rested upon them. I dare not complain, but that she, so young and innocent, should suffer is my chief regret."

"She has grieved over his worthlessness then?" said Vincent Eyre, with averted face. "It has not destroyed her love for him?"

"Love could not exist, even in a woman's breast, after such a disclosure," replied Percival Massey; "but the shock of learning Joscelynn's true character, and the overthrow of all the hopes and plans she had formed in connection with him have seriously affected her health. In all human probability, by preventing my arrest and the consequent misery to Gwendoline, you have saved her life."

Vincent was silent. His sacrifice had not been made in vain. The fragile, flower-like girl, no longer radiant and joyous as he had imagined her, but sad and drooping, would owe her immunity from still more intense suffering and bitter pain to him.

The reflection could not fail to be a grateful one to the young man. It repaid him for all that he had renounced on her behalf.

While mentally reviling Arthur Joscelynn for having brought sorrow upon her, the fact of her freedom gave him vague, undefined satisfaction.

They might never meet again and yet—far away in the distance rang the silver bells of hope. Vincent would have been more than mortal had he closed his ears to their sweet, inspiring chiming.

"Miss Massey will accompany you in your flight?" he said, interrogatively.

"Yes, I could not leave her behind to learn the history of my shortcomings from strangers; to be cross-questioned and interrogated by your brother. Sooner than do that I would face him myself!"

"You have no time to lose in carrying out your purpose," said Vincent Eyre, turning to depart. "Richard will be here in a few hours accompanied by a detective. I advise you to make good your escape while the chance of doing so is still yours. I neither can nor will help you any further!"

"One moment!" cried Percival Massey, detaining him. "Gwendoline shall not always remain ignorant of the means by which our escape was effected. The mercy you have shown me on her account, the debt of gratitude we both owe you, shall sooner or later be revealed to her. From her you will, perhaps, accept the thanks I dare not offer, if

you can find it in your heart to forgive her for being her father's daughter."

His visitor gone, Percival Massey told the footman that he had letters to write, but that he would himself turn out the gas when he had finished.

Gladly availing himself of the permission thus afforded, Jeames went back to bed, leaving the master of the house free to arrange his meditated flight.

What costly entertainments had been given in the Queen Anne mansion! What distinguished guests had thronged its spacious rooms, and round about the picturesque grounds!

The air around him teemed and palpitated with memories of his proud, successful career, all tending to swell the current of despairing, remorseful regret, that overwhelmed him now that the hour of retribution had arrived.

But it was no time to sit there indulging in reveries either painful or pleasant. The morning and Richard Eyre would arrive only too quickly.

He hardly dared to glance at the clock, its hands went round at such a fearful rate. He must rouse himself, if he wished to escape, and act promptly.

To awaken Gwendoline, and bid her prepare to accompany him, must be his next task. Warm-hearted and affectionate, he knew that she would consent to leave her home with him at a moment's notice, rather than allow him to go forth alone.

After consulting a thrice-told and a tidal service, Percival Massey crept noiselessly upstairs to his daughter's room.

The moonbeams were silencing the wide, lofty apartment when he entered it. They gave such an ethereal aspect to Gwendoline's wan, pallid beauty as she lay there in peaceful slumber, her golden hair falling over the snowy-whiteness of the faced pillow, that Percival Massey instinctively bent over her to ascertain that she still breathed.

"That I should have to awaken her to the knowledge of fresh sorrow," he murmured, regretfully. "Gwendoline!"

At the sound of the well-known voice she suddenly awoke, and sprang up in bed.

"Papa! What is it?" she asked, hurriedly. "Are you ill?"

He might have been, he looked so old and grey, and worn.

"No, child," he said, reassuringly, "but I have received some bad news. The man who brought it has only just left me. It will necessitate our leaving England at once, to avoid unpleasant consequences; that is, if you are willing to go with me at such short notice."

"Do you suppose I would let you go alone?" she inquired, reproachfully.

The "bad news" thus vaguely alluded to failed to overwhelm her, acquainted as she was with the fluctuating, uncertain nature of finance.

Men even richer than her father had been ruined in less than a week, or partially ruined, through some unlucky investment.

She imagined his trouble to refer chiefly to money matters.

"You have sustained some heavy loss, papa?" she said, compassionately. "You cannot face your liabilities? Is it not so?"

"Yes, yes!" he replied, eagerly, catching at the suggestion; "that is it, Gwendoline. We must hide ourselves for awhile, till affairs can be settled, and some arrangement entered into with my creditors. Not even the servants must know of our departure. Can you get ready to accompany me in half-an-hour's time?"

"Yes; delay in our case means ruin."

"Very well, I will be ready," she replied, bravely.

"Put on something warm. A Châtonne bag will be sufficient to carry your jewels and the things you require for immediate use. We can take no heavier luggage."

He left her, and Gwendoline, after making a swift toilet, emptied her jewel-case of its



contents, and looked out the few articles she intended to take with her.

Had this strange, unexpected event befallen her during the happy days of her engagement it would have filled her with terror and dismay.

As it was, she made her preparations calmly, and without any strong feeling of regret or anxiety for what had occurred. The previous sorrow had entirely absorbed her power of suffering for the time being, and rendered her indifferent to all else.

The desire to help her father to bear his supposed reverse of fortune, and to cling closely to him alone animated her. Personal feeling in the matter she had none.

When Percival Massey, after packing his own bag, and putting a roll of bank notes in the breast-pocket of his coat, rejoined her she was ready and waiting.

He glanced at the dark serge dress, the long fur-bordered mantle, the trim little velvet toque and thick veil that formed her travelling costume with approving eyes.

"A good selection," he remarked, "warm and useful. Step softly in going downstairs, and let me open the door. I understand the trick of the catch."

They left the house without disturbing any of its sleeping inmates.

The red-brick mansion, peering in the midst of its gardens and shrubberies, looked a peaceful, pleasant abode of wealth and ease, even in the cold grey of early dawn.

The father and daughter cast a lingering glance in the direction of the home they were leaving for ever, starting away from it like guilty culprits, fearful lest their own servants should detect their departure.

"How surprised they will be when they get up and find us gone!" said Gwendoline. "I hope your losses will not affect them, papa."

"No, I have written a note intended for Judson, in which I have told her to keep the servants on for the present, if they care to remain, and to keep the house in order generally till she receives further instructions from me," replied the financier. "Come, Gwendoline, we have no time to waste."

At his bidding she turned submissively away from the Laurels and the river, with a feeling that in leaving them behind, familiar landmarks as they were, she was saying good-bye to her old life and all connected with it before turning over a fresh page of existence.

Day, bright, full, cheery, bustling day once more dawned upon the world. But as it went on no strange visitors from town presented themselves at the Laurels, demanding to see the master of the house.

Instead a rumour, that presently resolved itself into a certainty, pervaded the great city.

From a whisper it swelled into a roar, the excitement increasing as it spread. It was on every lip. Even busy men condescended to discuss it for a second or two before returning to their work.

By night it had become universally known. The newspapers shouted it in their usually delicate, highly commendable manner to promote the sale of the evening papers, which could hardly be supplied fast enough to meet the demand.

Richard Eyre, the clever rising young barrister, had been murdered in his chambers, stabbed through the heart. His brother, Doctor Eyre, had been arrested on suspicion, and would shortly be put upon his trial for wilful murder!

## CHAPTER XXII.

The news of the murder, and the subsequent arrest of Vincent Eyre, served to put a fresh complexion upon Percival Massey's complicated affairs.

Flight was no longer imperatively necessary in order to avoid imprisonment. He would be accused, yes, the financier had comparatively little to fear from Vincent Eyre, of whose re-

luctance to denounce and bring him to justice he had already received substantial proof.

He remained at Marseilles, ready to depart at a moment's notice if danger threatened. He read the papers with avidity, and strove to pierce through the mystery that enveloped Richard Eyre's unnatural death.

That Vincent was not his brother's murderer, a man stained with a crime of the deepest dye, he felt morally certain. Not even to shield the woman he loved from unpleasant consequences, would Vincent Eyre imbrue his hands with blood.

No, he had paid that midnight visit to the Laurels evidently persuaded in his own mind that Richard intended to carry out his threat of arresting the financier on the following morning. He had warned their common enemy of his brother's intention, and then gone home. Beyond that act of treachery, prompted by love, he had not injured Richard. Some other hand had dealt the fatal blow that deprived the young barrister of life. In accusing Vincent of the murder, justice had acted in accordance with her usual owl-eyed policy, permitting the real culprit to escape, and putting an innocent man upon his trial for a crime of which he knew nothing.

That it should have been committed on that night of all others was an unaccountable fatality, never to be unravelled in this world. A few more hours, and Percival Massey's long concealed forgery and embezzlement would have been disclosed to the world through the agency of the man now lying cold in death. The avenging arm lifted to strike had in its turn been stricken down. Percival Massey's first sensation on hearing of the murder was—strange and unnatural as it may sound—one of intense relief.

Not apprehending any immediate danger now that Richard Eyre had ceased to exist, the financier, anxious to suppress any idle humours to which his secret departure might have given rise, wrote to his household at Twickenham, giving some plausible reasons for his own and Gwendoline's fitting, and alluding to their speedy return. Meanwhile letters were to be forwarded to the *Poste Restante*—his own temporary address was not allowed to transpire. Walking upon a thin crust that might at any moment give way, he could not be too careful.

He had spoken of returning to England merely for the sake of keeping up appearances. He had no intention of going back until Vincent Eyre's trial was over, and he felt certain that no damaging disclosure likely to affect himself would ever take place.

He had been advised of the death of Sandy MacNab in the hospital, on the night of his accident. Death had thus removed two stumbling blocks from his path in a short space of time. His secret was now in the hands of a man who had promised implicitly not to use it against him; at least, while his daughter lived.

Jessie MacNab had been conveyed to the nearest workhouse. She was not likely to live long and the financier, perhaps as a sop to his conscience, sent a sum of money to be expended for her benefit. The workhouse authorities applauded his generosity. Had the motive that prompted the gift been revealed to them, together with the relation in which the unhappy creature had stood to the brother of her benefactor, the gift might have lost some of its virtue, even in their eyes.

As the trial—a sensational one, in which the public took great interest—progressed slowly a new haunting fear took possession of Percival Massey's mind.

What if Vincent Eyre in his effort to clear himself, and to establish an *alibi*, were to disclose the cause of contention between himself and his brother, and to state where he had gone, and for what purpose, on that fatal night?

When a man's life and liberty are at stake he cannot be expected to observe strict principles. Considerations that might influence his

actions at other times become more thiel-down before the wind when vital interests tremble in the balance.

Vincent Eyre's cherished love for Gwendoline had induced him to refrain from punishing her father on a previous occasion, while he had even helped him to escape the vengeance meditated by another.

Would that love prove strong enough to prevent him from denouncing Percival Massey in order to strengthen his own cause now that he was placed in such a terrible situation?

Day by day, the financier read the evidence as it appeared in the papers. His name was never mentioned by the prisoner or anyone else concerned in the result of the trial.

Vincent made no voluntary statement, while he refused to satisfy his interrogators with regard to his movements on the night of the murder.

Beyond a solemn declaration of innocence, a proud indignant denial of having entertained any evil designs against his brother, whom he had neither followed nor spoken to after the unfortunate man had quitted his, Vincent's lodgings late that night, he attempted no defence.

Respecting the high words in which they had been heard to indulge, and the reason for his going out so soon after his brother, Vincent remained obstinately silent.

Mrs. Larkspur reluctantly witnessed to having overheard voices raised in the heat of passion, and to having seen Richard Eyre apparently almost beside himself with anger. He had left the house a little later on "banging the door behind him like an earthquake," and Doctor Eyre had also gone out soon after his brother, without saying whether he had a patient to visit or not.

Did she sit up for him? No, he had a latch-key, and was in the habit of coming or going at will without disturbing her. She had been wakeful on that particular night, and, on hearing his footsteps coming upstairs, she had struck a light to see what time it was. By her watch it wanted only five minutes to four. What had kept him from home all those hours she could not say.

But the most damning fact in the circumstantial evidence against Vincent was the discovery of the handkerchief, marked with his name in full, close to the body of the murdered man. Richard Eyre's watch and purse had not disappeared, thus proving that the murder had not been committed for the purpose of robbery. From the disarrangement of the furniture it was evident that a brief struggle had taken place between the murderer and his victim. The former had left no clue by which he might be tracked, unless the handkerchief, that silent witness dropped by him in his flight, might be supposed to indicate the shedder of blood.

Vincent's explanation that his brother had taken the handkerchief believing it to be his own, and put it in his pocket while they were conversing together, without the mistake being pointed out to him, was received with evident unbelief.

Would a man calmly see his handkerchief carried off by another person without making some remark, or attempting to reclaim his property, unintentionally sequestered? The story was a lame one, and only tended to confirm the impression of his guilt.

Vincent's refusal to give an account of his night wanderings and the direction in which he had gone, his persistent silence upon the subject of the quarrel with Richard, told against him considerably. Taken in conjunction with the finding of the handkerchief, some people said it was enough to hang him. The feeling of pity that had at first existed towards him in the public mind gradually changed to one of profound horror and detestation.

As the trial proceeded, and Vincent, persevering in his dogged reticence, made no sign, Percival Massey felt himself capable of interpreting aright the line of argument by

which the young man had arrived at his decision to remain silent, and involve no one else in his own unenviable fate.

Had he laid bare the financier's past abuse of his father's kindness, the refusal meditated by his brother, and his own effort to frustrate an obvious act of justice from being carried out, for the sake of a woman closely related to the culprit, it would not have availed him much. Had he called upon Percival Massey as a witness, after dragging his name through the dust, the financier could only have testified to the manner in which he had spent a portion of the night on which the murder was committed. He could not have proved him innocent of the crime, or have sworn that he had not gone straight to his brother's chamber on his return from Twickenham. The very fact of his having entered into a truce with the man his brother had determined to bring to justice would, if revealed, have been anything but favourable to Vincent.

Rather than undo the sacrifice already made, and impose pain upon Gwendoline, he had plainly decided to give up the doubtful advantage to be gained by implicating her father. Loyal and steadfast he had elected to suffer himself if he might but shield her; and, with this desire ever uppermost in his heart, he was willing to dispense with the evidence that Percival Massey was by no means likely to furnish, unless compulsion was brought to bear upon him.

For Gwendoline's sake! He repeated these words sometimes, poor fellow, when his brain reeled beneath the weight of the awful accusation brought against him—when the temptation to reveal all that he knew was strong upon him. They never failed to endue him with fresh courage, while he trusted to Heaven and his own innocence to right him in the end.

And Percival Massey, instinctively comprehended all this, availed himself of Vincent's generosity, and refrained from coming forward as a witness to say what he could in the young man's favour.

Such a proceeding would have necessitated humiliating and dangerous admissions, that might have led to his being placed in the dock himself to answer for the flagrant offence committed in the past.

He had grown cowardly in his old age, incapable of acting boldly either in a good or an evil cause. Fearful of being hurled from the proud position to which he had climbed, the stately grey-haired man, with his talent and *finesse*, was yet thankful to shelter himself at the expense of his protector, and to take advantage of Vincent's self-abnegation. His evidence might not turn the scale in the latter's favour, if given, and upon this doubt he built his excuse for not giving it, for remaining selfishly silent.

None the less was he chained to a rock with the twin vultures of fear and remorse gnawing at his heart.

The papers at Sandy's lodgings, the written deposition, what had become of them? If still in existence, they would be sufficient to bring him to justice without Vincent Eyre's intervention.

It would have eased his mind could he have known that the deposition had fallen into Vincent's hands and been promptly destroyed. His arrest had not taken place for several hours after the discovery of his brother's murder, and his first act on being apprised of the same, and going to Richard's chamber, was to possess himself of that important document.

What it had cost him to destroy that convincing proof of his father's integrity no one knew. He would have preserved it but for the suspicious questions and lowering looks that greeted him on all sides, and warned him that he would soon cease to be a free agent, unless he could prove himself innocent of his brother's murder. Rather than allow it to be scrutinised by others he burnt the deposition, and thus for the second time preserved the

Masseys, father and daughter, from exposure and ruin.

Closely watched by a detective even then Vincent had been unable to obtain the papers lying at Sandy's lodging, and his speedy arrest served to put them quite beyond his reach.

But they were not fated to do any immediate harm. The landlord of the British Lion, taking possession of Sandy's box in lieu of rent owing, failed to discover them, hidden as they were between the false lid and the upper one.

(To be continued.)

## LOST IN THE MOUNTAINS.

—0—

It was a wintry afternoon, late in the year, when two carriages drew up at the Hospice of Saint Bernard, on the top of the Alps. In the foremost—a huge lumbering vehicle—sat Mrs. Hargrave, enveloped in furs, yet still complaining irritably of the cold. Opposite her was her daughter Alice, just nineteen, and pretty and graceful enough for a wood-nymph. Beside her nestled her sister May, a bright, mischievous golden-haired fairy of seven. In the rumble behind were the Italian courier and the Burgundian nurse. The *caldche* that followed close after was occupied by a stout, soldierly man of sixty, and by Sir Arthur Lennox, a tall, stiff, self-important baronet of five-and-thirty. The *caldche* belonged to him, and his companion was Colonel Gregory Howard, the uncle of Alice and May.

The travellers, on alighting, were led through arched galleries, with great stone piers, and narrow casements sunk in the thick walls, and shown into cell-like chambers, where the braziers of hot embers, hastily set therein, only seemed to intensify the cold by their dull glow. Having removed their wraps the ladies hurried down to the room where supper was spread.

"For I shall die," said Mrs. Hargrave, fretfully, "if I do not soon get something warm to eat and drink."

In this apartment, huge logs burned in a great fireplace; and before this the table was drawn up; and by the side of it the Colonel and Sir Arthur were standing, waiting.

"I wonder if anybody else has come to-night," said the Colonel, when the meal was nearly over. "I thought I heard a diligence drive up just now."

"Gad!" replied Sir Arthur, with unusual feeling for him, "I pity anyone who is abroad to-night. Hark how the wind howls! Why, it shakes even these massive walls."

Just at that moment the door of the room was opened by a gentleman enveloped to the ears in his furred coat. He had evidently arrived by the diligence, and had mistaken this apartment for the public one; but, perceiving his mistake, he drew back, softly closing the door behind him; so softly, indeed, that his presence had not been observed except by Alice, who gave a quick start, turned deathly pale, and unconsciously put her hand to her heart. The others did not notice either him or her; for they were absorbed in the antics of her young sister, who, always irrepressible, was more irrepressible to-night than ever.

Little May was one of those imaginative children who are always fancying themselves somebody else, and trying to realise it in action. She was a born mimic and actress. To-night she was in a perfect gale. With the aid of a shawl she had made for herself a court train; then she had put the Colonel's hat on; and afterwards, taking Sir Arthur's cane, had paraded up and down the room, stopping to bow to everyone in turn, and making constantly the cunningest little speeches. This she called "playing theatre." Then she caricatured her nurse, and next took off the courier; all so racily that the Colonel was

convulsed with laughter; and even the pompous Sir Arthur unbent into a grim smile, especially when he saw that Alice was particularly amused.

"There, that's enough," said the Colonel, at last. "You'll kill me, May, if you go on. What do you say, Sir Arthur, to a smoke?"

And rising, he left the room, followed by the baronet, in search of some more remote apartment where the solemn rites could be performed apart from the ladies.

Alice drew a long breath of relief. Sir Arthur, though popular with both her mother and uncle, on account of his rank, his long pedigree, and his wealth, was her detestation. Perhaps if he had been willing to confine himself to playing the part of a friend she might have tolerated him; but as he essayed to act the lover, and had fastened himself on to their party in order to carry out his design, she absolutely hated him.

"It is time for you to go to bed, May. Go, Alice, and find the nurse," said her mother, languidly. "I declare the nurse is getting to be good for nothing; she is always out of the way when wanted."

Alice suspected that the nurse was flirting with the courier in the servants' hall. She hurried down the passage in that direction, but had gone only half way when a voice called her name, and in another instant she was clasped close in two strong arms, and sobbing with mingled surprise and happiness upon the manly breast of the traveller who had looked in at the door.

"Philip! Philip!" was all she could articulate; and he replied with whispered words of endearment, drawing her quickly into the shadows of the remotest corridor. "I can hardly believe it is you," she said, with a sob and a laugh. "When I saw you in the doorway I almost thought it was a ghost."

"I should find you out even if I were one," he answered, with another embrace; "but, thank goodness, I am still tolerably substantial and earthly."

"But how do you come to be here? Did you expect to find us? Oh, Philip, Philip!"

"Of course I expected to, my darling. I got to Geneva just after you left, and had no difficulty in tracing your movements," he said. "When I heard that Sir Arthur was with you I resolved that nothing should keep me back. I shall be near you, and in spite of your uncle and everybody, we shall be able to meet sometimes. All their tyranny cannot hinder that."

"But Uncle Gregory is so savage," sighed Alice. "Oh, worse than ever, since that day when he met us in the Louvre—"

"Never fear, darling," her lover broke in. "If we are only true to each other no human power can really divide us."

"Oh, Philip, I have been so wretched; no news from you—no possibility of getting any or of writing. And that horrid Sir Arthur, at the last moment, deciding to travel with us; and mamma and Uncle Gregory treating him as if he were the Grand Mogul. How I hate that man!" cried Alice, with energy.

"Does he really persecute you?" Philip asked, with an ominous contraction of his brows. "For if he does—"

"He doesn't dare exactly, as yet," interrupted Alice, with an emphatic nod of her pretty head. "But mamma torments me half to death, and Uncle Greg sneers about poor lawyers—and it's all so dreadful. But I shan't mind, Philip, now that I know you are near."

"If there was any reason but my poverty," said the lover, "I might be more charitable. They can't take exception to my family. My great grandfathers, on both sides, were noble, and the Stanhopes, ever since, though never rich, have always kept their names high on the roll of honour."

"Of one thing be sure, dear, I will never, never give you up," exclaimed Alice. "Ah! what a blessed day that was when you came to my aid, when I was lost in Paris. Ever since, as you know, I have loved you. They can't drag me to the altar. Even if we are not to marry, I will marry no one else."



They talked long, as lovers will, overlooking the time, till at last Alice cried,—  
“Oh, dear, I had forgot. I was sent to fetch May's nurse. I must go, this very moment.”

But though the nurse was unearthed, and though Alice hurried to the parlour, no May was there. Mrs. Hargraves, dozing on the sofa, woke up, rubbed her eyes, and looked around half dazed.

“May,” she said. “Why, the child was here not a minute ago! I can't have been asleep longer than that.”

Though, in fact, she had slept for half-an-hour at least.

Further inquiry failed to discover May anywhere. She was not in her bedroom, nor in the refectory, nor in the offices, nor in any of the corridors. At last, a servant said that he had noticed “the little mees” standing at a side-door, some time ago, looking out; but, thinking it was all right, had passed by, and left her there. To this postern they went, and there found, sure enough, the prints of little feet in the snow, half obliterated. A full quarter of an hour had passed, meantime.

“She is lost—she has wandered off,” cried the mother. “Oh, my darling!” and she went into violent hysterics.

Little May had, indeed, gone forth into the stormy night. Alice had not been absent from the room more than a minute or two when Mrs. Hargraves dropped off into a doze. All the afternoon May's imagination had been full of the story of Little Red Riding-Hood, which Alice had told her, for the fiftieth time, in the carriage. She was fired with the ambition to be a Red Riding-Hood herself; to go out as if to her grandma's, and perhaps meet the wolf; for the horrible had, as yet, a fascination for her, which it has for so many young children. Now was her chance. Alice was gone, mamma was asleep, the nurse was absent. Stealthily she crept from the room, flew up to the chamber, threw on a shawl and hood, and had started to leave, when her eyes fell on a shawl-strap, enclosing a waterproof.

“Oh, I forgot!” she cried; “I must take something. Riding-Hood carried food to her grandma. I have no food; but I will take this.”

She snatched it up as she spoke, rushed out, and remembering a neglected postern, sought it. Here she stood for a moment, looking up at the fast-falling snowflakes and admiring them, and then glanced back to see if anyone was observing her. Finally, after a little more hesitation, she stepped boldly out into the night.

The wind howled and raved; the snow fell in a white sheet; yet little May pushed on full of glee at her escape. Once or twice she looked back at the receding lights of the Hospice, and, noticing how every time they seemed further and further off, laughed triumphantly. At last she reached a spot where, on the right, rose a wall of solid rock, with a few stunted pines clinging to its side. She turned the corner of this, and could just dimly see, on the left, a deep abyss, from which instinctively she shrank. Far in the distance lofty peaks soared up, white and ghostly; gorges and valleys, just visible in the gloom, spread out on every hand; the wind roared, the snowflakes whirled, and groaning sounds were heard, as of avalanches falling afar off: and at last, looking back once more, she found the Hospice lights had disappeared, and that she was alone on the mountain.

For the first time now her brave little heart failed her. For the first time she began to realise, in a vague, childish way, the possibility of danger. She had not minded the idea of meeting the wolf. But this awful gloom—this utter loneliness—the cold that began to benumb her frame—were too much for her; and all at once she began to cry.

But she had a brave soul; and after a little while she dried her eyes, and thought to retrace her steps. If she could only see the

Hospice lights again, she said, she would not be so afraid. But the blinding snow continually misled her. Nowhere could she find the true path. Whichever way she turned she saw only horrible precipices. She struggled on, however, a while longer. She had quite forgotten, now, the part of Red Riding Hood—forgot the grandma—forgot the wolf. All she thought of was mamma waiting for her by the warm fire, and sister Alice.

When the loss was discovered the Colonel was almost as much beside himself as his sister.

“Dead—frozen to death!” he moaned.

“Oh, Heaven! Dead! My little May!” Sir Arthur, who had never liked the child—he was too selfish to like any children—exhibited, however, annoyance only. “I can do no good: for me to go out searching for her would be ridiculous,” he thought. So, calling his valet, he said: “I believe I shall go to bed, and so escape from all this fuss. When there is any news—if it is good—you may call me! if not, let me sleep the night out.” Alice was the only one who was of any real service. Her thoughts had turned at once to Philip; but he was nowhere to be found. It was only after a considerable delay, and when the alarm-bell had been rung again and again, that one of the monks told her that her lover, on first hearing of May's disappearance, and divining before all the rest what had happened, had called together several of the brethren, and half-a-dozen of their famous dogs, and had started out to find the lost child. “Oh, then, if she can be saved, he will save her!” cried Alice, when she heard this, clasping her hand.

“Thank Heaven! thank Heaven!”

Philip is doing, meantime, all he can to justify her faith in him. He was one of those men who are born leaders of their fellows, and the command of the expedition had fallen to him from the first, although the monks were familiar with Alpine storms, and he was not.

“We will start from here,” he said, “and spread out like the sticks of an opened fan—only keeping sight of each other always; in this way we shall cover the whole ground.”

But though the search had now lasted for what, in his excited state, he thought hours, no trace of May had been discovered. Suddenly a cry arose in the distance.

“They have found her. Dead or alive, they have found her,” cried the eldest of the monks. “I know the cry well. *Laus Deo!*” and he crossed himself reverently, hurrying forward as he spoke.

But Philip was first over the ascent, first at the side of May, who was half buried in the snow. She lay on her side. One little hand had drawn the shawl closer around her, as if in a last effort to keep warm before she lost consciousness. Her eyes were closed. But for the faint colour on her cheek, she might have been thought to be dead. As it was, she looked like one asleep.

Philip had knelt down and put his ear to her.

“Thank Heaven!” he cried, “she breathes, faintly and weak: but she breathes. The sooner we get her to the Hospice the better. But first let me see if I can force a restorative down her throat.”

He took the proffered flask from the monk as he spoke, and with difficulty got the lips open, and poured a few drops in. The child uttered a deep sigh, and half opened her eyes. “Mamma,” she said, faintly. “Is it you, mamma—or Alice?”

“No, dear; but we will take you to your mamma and to Alice at once,” answered Philip, lifting her in his strong arms as he spoke, the tears coming into his manly eyes. “No, thank you,” to a monk who offered assistance, “I am quite strong enough. It is only round the corner, after all; and then the Hospice can be seen close at hand.”

Less than ten minutes after the door of the great convent is flung open, and a man enters, carrying a little figure in his arms; and his first words, as the Colonel rushes forward, are: “Safe, as you see, and not dead.”

They soon bring her to, and, as she lies locked fast in her sister's arms, the Colonel recovered his senses sufficiently to ask by whom she had been rescued; and then the group opens that had crowded round the little one, and one of the monks pushes forward a reluctant figure.

“Philip Stanhope!” cries the Colonel, while Alice looks up—and oh! with what a love-light in her eyes! “What you?”

Then Philip modestly tells his story; and little May looks up, and calls,—

“Uncle Greg, yes, it was Philip found me—Philip found me! You know Philip—that we met in Paris, and whom Alice likes so much. Oh, I know you like him; you needn't try to stop me!”—this to Alice. And, Uncle Greg, you mustn't make them unhappy; for Alice cries at night—I hear her when she thinks I'm asleep. He wants to marry her; and I want him to, Uncle Greg.”

“And, by Gad, he shall!” thunders the old soldier, fairly breaking into sobs as he wrings Philip's hands. “I'll teach that cowardly baronet to go to bed, and lie there when his friends are in trouble. Here, you young minx of an Alice! don't look down like that, and try to hid your face on the child's shoulder. May wants it; I want it; and you're to marry Philip Stanhope—do you hear? By Gad! I've more'n enough for both of you; and a fellow with such pluck will make his way—will make his way. We'll see him in Parliament yet!”

And the next morning, unable to bring Uncle Greg to reason, the baronet sulkily leaves in the *caldche*; and Philip Stanhope makes the journey down into Italy with the rest of the party; and he and Alice realise that the road upon which they have entered together is never to know any separating point in this world. F. B.

#### THE CAROLINE ISLANDS.

THE Caroline archipelago forms part of Micronesia, and is situated to the south of the Ladrões, to the west of the Marshalls, and to the north of New Guinea. It consists of about 500 islands, of which the greater number are only *atolls*.

The number of real islands is only forty-eight, but as each of these is surrounded by a certain number of islets, it may be said that the archipelago consists of forty-eight groups; forty-three of these are low coral islands, while five are composed of basalt, with coral at the base.

The superficial area over which the archipelago is spread is about forty-five square leagues. Geographically it may be divided into three main groups, separated by two large channels; the eastern group of which the principal island is Ascension or Ponape; the central group, and the eastern group, the principal island being Eap or Jap, of which much is being heard just now.

Ponape is between fifty and sixty miles round, and has a peak in the centre which rises to a height of 2,860 feet. At one part of its coast there are curious ruins which are still a problem for ethnologists; they are apparently the remains of a large building constructed of huge blocks of basalt.

The archipelago, although close to the equator, enjoys a temperate climate; there are two rainy seasons—one in January, the other in August.

The islands are of astonishing fertility; the principal productions are the bread-fruit, cocoa-nut, the palm, bamboo, orange, and clove tree, sugar-cane, beetle, sweet potato, &c.

The population is generally estimated at 18,000 to 20,000, and belongs ethnologically to the Micronesian family.

The principal elements are Malay and Maori; but there is also a mixture of Negrito and Papuan, to which in later times was added a Chinese and Japanese element.

## HAD WE NEVER LOVED SO BLINDLY.

### CHAPTER XIX.

A LEVEL platform at the top of Crowfoot Hall had been carefully mown, when the dew was on the grass, by gardeners sent over from the Abbey that morning, and a first-rate band had been engaged, so that dancing might begin under favourable auspices. All the girls had partners, but all the would-be partners had not girls.

That article which is generally in superabundance at country parties was rather scarce; and more than one young man, who was accustomed to lounge about doorways and give himself airs when maids were in requisition, was now madly anxious to engage anyone to whirl round with him to the strains of Target's band.

Eustace's companion was dragged ruthlessly away from him, though she protested that she was tired, and preferred sitting down. Edgar Winder was no longer allowed to monopolise Emily Willoughby, who in a flutter of pride and excitement found she had a choice of two or three partners, probably for the first time in her rustic life.

Frank Rivers leant against the crooked stem of a thorn, smoking a cigarette, with discontent and all uncharitableness raging in his usually tranquil heart.

"She wouldn't give him up! Fickle little thing, and only last month, she had treated him—Frank Rivers—as if he were her brother, talking gravely about his future—as if she really cared what he did with it. What fools they all looked, jiggling about in the broiling sun, whilst Mrs. Fane, the only sensible one of the party, sat dozing decorously on a pile of cushions! Perhaps he had been hard on her, his thoughts going back with a jump—she mayn't have meant so very much by saying she would stick to him. She would stick to a chimney-sweep if he had pulled Eustace Trevanion out of the water, and he had been rough to her; he hadn't given her a chance."

He had half a mind to go after her and apologise. He had been mad to think she would say "yes" meekly, when asked an outrageous question in the fiercest tone. He wouldn't have liked her half so well if she had. He didn't care for girls who gave in directly without showing fight.

When he came to this point, his brow cleared, and he looked round with eager eyes, anxious to find her and make peace. There was Alice Winder, looking prim as ever, swathed in an æsthetic garment of washed-out green, which made her sickly complexion look sicker still; there was Cissy Johnson, drooping over her partner's coat-sleeve, like a limp rag hung out to dry; Nesta Rivers, with her yellow head looking like a kingcup, emblem of spring in its simplicity and brightness! the two Willoughbys, with rosy faces, enjoying themselves with all their might, &c. &c.; but where was Flora Trevanion? When he had ascertained that she really was not there he grew uneasy.

Eustace was lying back on his pillows looking tired and jaded, with no one to amuse him; Philip Fane was sitting on a fallen trunk smoking meditatively, but looking bored. There were only two missing, Sir Basil and Flora. For sure and certain they were together, and his wrath grew fiercer within his boyish breast. He turned away from the music and dancing, feeling out of tune with it all, and strolled down a narrow gully which led towards the lake.

The ground was very rough, so that he had to keep his eyes upon the loose stones for fear of slipping, and he walked on, thinking he was quite alone, till a voice said close to his ear—

"Are you looking for a lady?" and starting violently, he saw a man half crouching amongst the bushes.

"If I am, it's no business of yours."

"Maybe it is, and maybe it isn't. It's my business, anyhow, to save a girl if I can from a miserable life."

"What do you mean?" his eye running contemptuously over the shrinking figure, and white, anxious-looking face. Was it possible that this fellow really knew of Flora Trevanion's mistaken infatuation, and wished to save her from its consequences?

"I mean if you don't want her to have a villain for her husband you had better go in and win. You'll find her, as he's left her."

"Where?"

"Tother side of the willow."

He was making off, when Rivers called to him to stop.

"What do you mean by calling Sir Basil Fane a villain?"

"I mentioned no names, but if the cap fits let him wear it," with an unpleasant leer. "If you want to know more get him to tell you what he was doing in the month of February, eighteen hundred and eighty."

"I don't want to hear anything about him," loftily; "but I am his guest, and no man shall run him down."

"I'll hunt him down; that's what I'm after," shuffling off in a hurry.

"You had better look out."

There was no answer, but some way ahead Frank could hear the bushes rustling, as if something alive were pushing its way through them.

What did it all mean, as he climbed on to a rough grey boulder and cast an eager glance round? Evidently there was some mystery in Sir Basil's past which this man knew some thing of, but why should he be concerned himself about Flora Trevanion? and how should he connect her with himself? He had not got it printed on his forehead that he was looking for her or for anyone else, and yet the man found it out at once. He had not proclaimed his love for her to the four winds of Heaven, and yet this shabby, creeping creature seemed to know all about it.

It disgusted him to think that a secret which he had not divulged to his mother, or even told to himself, should be guessed and spoken broadly of by a stranger. It disgusted him, but at the same time it seemed to give strength and force to the feeling which had been germinating for months in the depths of his heart, and a wild longing rose in his breast to take possession of Flora Trevanion, and secure her from all evil of the world by making her his wife.

He felt as if he would have given anything to add a few years on to his own nineteen summers, for her guardian would only laugh at a boy proposing gravely to be the husband of his ward, and Flora herself would never look upon him seriously in the light of a lover. She talked to him sometimes as if she were years older than he was, and she would only burst out laughing if he made her a formal proposal.

If things had gone on in their old groove he would have willingly waited till he had had some chance of distinguishing himself; but now if he lost a day she might be snapped up by Sir Basil, and his hopes of winning her gone for ever. Everything might be lost by waiting, but everything would still more surely be lost if he spoke too soon, and got himself laughed at for his pains. Laughter is more fatal to love than a bucket of tears, and his courage failed as he thought of facing it. And then the next moment all his perplexities were forgotten, and he bounded forward like a deer, for he caught sight of a girlish figure clothed in white, standing with clasped hands, not two hundred yards from him.

"I've been looking for you," he said, breathlessly. "Where have you been hiding? What have you been doing?"

She turned to him, and he saw that her face was white as her dress, and her eyes looked like those of a person who has been woken suddenly out of sleep.

"I—I—I've done nothing. Did anyone want me?"

"Yes. Everyone is dancing, and all the fellows have been wanting you badly for a partner. Won't you come?" looking down at her with a sense of uneasiness coming over him.

"What mystery was there walking abroad in the clear daylight of this summer's afternoon?"

"I couldn't dance," with something like a shiver, though the heat was oppressive.

"But you always do. Why not to-day? You are not huffy with me, are you?" his fair face flushing.

"Angry? No; why should I be? Looking puzzled. "It isn't you whom I've got to hate."

"I hope not," with a short laugh. "Don't do it, to oblige me."

"Is Eustace all right?" stepping down and picking a leaf off the willow.

"Rather bored, I think. There was no one to speak to him," he answered, readily, feeling sure that would induce her to come more than anything else.

"Then, I ought to go, but somehow," with the ghost of a smile, "I feel, sort of, it."

"That is because you've been moping here by yourself. You look as if you had seen a ghost."

"Do I? Let us come," with sudden eagerness; "nobody must think I'm not enjoying myself," and she took a few steps up the hill. "Aren't you? You were as jolly as possible only an hour ago. What has come to you?" his curiosity growing so much for further reluctance.

"Don't tell anyone," she said, softly, "but I feel as if I had had bad news."

"But you haven't! There's been nobody here to tell it," he said, confidently. "I wish you wouldn't look so white. There'll be half-a-hundred reports about you."

"But there mustn't be. I wouldn't have anyone think there was anything."

"Then you must perk up, and do you know, one turn of a walk would be the very thing to give you a colour," he added, earnestly, becoming quite Machiavellian in his craft.

### CHAPTER XX.

FRANK'S arm was round her waist as soon as they reached the level lawn, and, before she could say yes or no, he had whisked her into the middle of the throng.

After the first reluctance she let herself go willingly enough, wanting to see if she could get rid of the wretched oppression of mind which Sir Basil's strange conduct had brought on her.

Her legs felt so tired that she could scarcely guide them, but Frank's strong arm supported her, and only held her a little closer when she seemed inclined to fall.

Philip Fane watched her, and wondered at the way in which the mere sight of her wistful eyes, and wild rose bloom stained his usually callous heart.

There was a grace and a sweetness in her such as none of the other girls had; every movement had a charm, every look an attraction. When shy, she never looked awkward; when angry, her eyes flashed so gloriously that you were almost glad to put her through passion.

One look at her face would tell you that she would never do a mean thing, or commit an act of cruelty; and if her words were sometimes fancy, there was a drop in her lashes, which showed she could never be badly at three in her short upper lip, which proved that she would never stand impertinence.

He looked from her to the others all, with the exception of pretty little Nesta Rivers, were average country girls, with too much colour in their cheeks, and too much substance about their figures, and it seemed to him that Flora Trevanion looked like a lily amongst a bunch of marigolds.

He must have her! He couldn't do without her! His cold, impassive self seemed changed,



his whole nature altered. His blood ran like fire in his veins, his eyes shone.

He could not stand seeing her any longer with Frank's arm round her supple waist, and, going up to the band, he told them to stop at once.

As the music ceased, some of the dancers looked round in surprise, whilst others went on, like those under the spell of the "Tarentula," unable to stop, and Frank Rivers was one of these.

Philip Fane passed him, and, coming up just as the last turn was taken, saw him subside under the same tree slowly, and with evident reluctance, taking his arm from round the slight figure which seemed to need his support.

"How could you have the heart to leave Miss Trevanion after you?" he said, aggressively. "She looks ready to drop. I have stopped her, and she is now here, for her sake. A glass of champagne will do her good."

"There was no dancing in the question," said Frank indignantly, "and she was the best thing for her."

"A glass of champagne is a very good thing," comes with him. "Miss Trevanion is a very good thing, and she is now here, for her sake. A glass of champagne will do her good."

"And I'll get the champagne," said Frank, angrily.

"I don't want a glass of champagne," said Philip, "I am going to Eustace."

"He won't want you," looking over his shoulder and placing himself so that Philip could not see her brother. "He does not often get such a pleasure, I fancy, and it would be cruel to interrupt."

Frank had just been bitten-holed by a social bore, and did not hear as the other two passed by him.

"Is Miss Rivers with him? How kind she is!"

"Sit down here," not answering her question, but bringing her to a delicious little nook, a rocky seat or ledge with ferns to form a back ground of delicate beauty. "I'll bring you something to do you good."

"I don't want anything but a cup of tea," said something else wants you," and with a sharp look round to see that she was screened from the sight of everyone by the fronds of fern, he hurried up to the table where refreshments were laid as in a private house.

Flora's thoughts went back to Sir Basil, who was still absent. Nobody seemed to miss him except herself; and to her it seemed inexplicably sad that the one who had planned this expedition of pleasure, and taken such an infinity of trouble to make it a success, should derive no enjoyment from it. Where was he now? Wandering over the hills with that haunted, miserable look in his face, whilst all those whom he had brought together were enjoying themselves to their hearts' content in utter forgetfulness of him! The thought of his loneliness drew her nearer to loving him than she had ever been before, and she was engrossed with the longing to comfort him, when Philip came back with a nice, and a delicate Bohemian glass tumbler, filled to the brim with sparkling Claret.

"Drink every drop of it," he said, kneeling on one knee in front of her, preparatory to subsiding on to the grass. "If my cousin were here he would say the same. Poor fellow! I'm afraid he has got one of his headaches. Rather unfortunate for Lady Rivers."

"But she isn't here?" said Philip, looking at his watch.

"But the Hon. Nesta Rivers is. I'll tell you a secret. That pretty little girl with the big blue eyes was sent here to-day to captivate my cousin."

"Sir Basil!" her eyes opening wide, and she said, "Yes, the Riverscourt people are not very rich, and the Abbey is a big bit of cheese for a little mouse to gobble."

"Is that why he told me to hate him?" flashed through Flora's mind like a sudden revelation, a brilliant flash overspreading her cheeks as she met Mr. Fane's eyes fastened upon her. "And do you think he will

be gobbled?" she said, aloud, looking at her plate.

"No, I don't. Fact is," nursing his knee, "Basil is bound to remain a bachelor."

"I know that," quickly.

"Oh, you do!" feeling intensely surprised, for he had had no idea that Sir Basil really meant what he said. He considered that he made the assertion that he should never marry simply to throw him off his guard, and it had only made him resolve to be more wide-awake than ever. "Is he going to tell all the young ladies of the neighbourhood in order that they might break their hearts?"

"I really don't say," said Philip.

"I but he didn't tell you the reason?"

with a look of some incredulity into her eyes.

The could not restrain the involuntary eager look which came into her face as she thought that through her mind that Basil was the man who could tell her the clue to the mystery; and the excitement she remembered that if Sir Basil chose to keep it there, she had no right to learn it from anyone else, and her features settled down into a cold, unyielding mask.

"Of course he didn't," she answered, quietly, playing with the last remnants of the strawberry and cream. "It is not likely that he would confide in me."

Philip cast a glance over his shoulder to see if he could see that there was no one within earshot. Then lowering his voice he said, with marked significance,

"You are not to walk with muddy boots into the drawing-room."

"What do you mean?" If there was one thing that Flora more especially disliked it was to be deceived, when she wanted an explanation, and this remark seemed like it.

"I mean that he who has been through this mud has been the same as those whose boots are spoked."

"Mad?" sitting upright and looking him straight in the face, with ineffable contempt. "If you mean that Sir Basil has done anything to be ashamed of, I don't believe it."

Philip Fane bit his lip.

"Thousands a-year, nowadays, do instead of the aureole of a saint."

"And you think I respect him and look up to him because he is rich?" his breast heaving with breathless wrath.

"I think you are like the rest of the world; you don't like to cast a stone unless the man is down."

"Thank you," getting up in haste. "I don't know why you wish to insult me."

"Nothing was further from my thoughts. Sit down, pray! You are right in objecting to be classed with the rest of the world because you are immeasurably above them. I know that the only thing that draws you to my cousin is pity, but you never were more mistaken. He is a misanthrope, a gloomy-minded individual, without a care or a thought for anyone beyond the family of Fane. For years he has hated women, and you can see how uncomfortable he is in their society even now. There is nothing romantic in his gloom—quite the contrary, it is the outcome of a deed which he would not care to own."

"I don't believe it!" passionately. "He is the best man that ever lived. Think of his goodness to Eustace!"

"A whim, nothing more; or rather it is another instance of his love of power. He likes to pit his will against yours—that's why he keeps your brother at the Abbey. I really should have thought you might have seen that for yourself, an infection of scorn in his voice."

"I don't see it. He is good to everyone, not only to Eustace. Can you say he has never done you a service?"

"That I can't," with a short laugh, as he shook the bits of dry grass off his coat.

"Dear old Basil! I don't know how my debts would be paid without him."

"And yet you can speak evil of him behind his back," with resentful eyes.

"Yes, Miss Trevanion; and you are the

last who ought to complain. I sacrificed my affection for my cousin to my devotion to you," and he bowed with an air of hurt dignity.

What she would have answered he never knew, for the storm which was impending broke over their heads with an awful crash. Flora sprang forward.

"Eustace! Eustace!" she said, nervously. "Stop!" cried Fane. "I'll see after him. Good heavens!" involuntarily stepping back as a flash of lightning ran along the ground at their feet.

At the same moment there was a cry from the other side of the lawn, a girl's cry of intense horror, and Eustace came like a wild thing across the grass, whilst Fane ran after her, looking round for a further explanation as he went.

Everyone had apparently rushed the moment before to the spot where Eustace Trevanion had been lying, but all he saw now was Eustace Willoughby, with all the colour gone from her cheeks, and Mrs. Philip Fane wringing her hands.

"What is it?" he asked, hurriedly, whilst Flora stopped to hear the answer. It came, interrupted by gasping sobs.

"He'll be dashed to pieces. The lightning started the pony."

"He was in his chair!"

"He's gone down there," and she covered her face with her hands.

Flora waited to hear no more.

## CHAPTER XXI.

Flora Trevanion, wild with the feeling that makes a house fight for her cubs, pushed through the small crowd fringing the edge of the hill, and flew helter-skelter over the rough ground in the desperate hope of saving her brother from the fate that must await him. The sky was black as night, and the side of the hill was covered with little clumps of bramble-bushes; and wild roses, which interrupted the view.

Frank Rivers rushed past her, taking flying leaps, and calling out to her in a choking voice that "it would be all right," when all he expected himself was to find a heap of mangled remains, with the life shaken out of them.

She could not see anything, but the ground underneath her feet, illumined every now and then as with a flame of fire, and her heart was nearly bursting with maddening fear. As she sped on, with failing breath and failing strength, a hand was laid on her arm, and she was stopped by Sir Basil Fane.

Her head went round in a whirl, she could not see him, and she did not even know who it was.

"Your brother is here; you must be quite quiet, and we'll get him home as soon as we can."

Then he led her up to where the chair was turned over on its side with a smashed wheel, lying down on the grass; and the pony, taken out of the shafts broken-kneed, was shaking with pain and terror. And beyond the chair and the pony Frank Rivers was kneeling on the ground, a white face pillowed on his knee.

"He has only fainted, there is nothing to be alarmed at," said Sir Basil.

But Frank did not raise his head, only bent it lower, as Flora dropped down on her knees and took her brother's hand in hers, chafing it softly because it felt so cold. Not a word was spoken; but in the stillness between the crashes of thunder there was the gasping sound of tearless sobs. Meanwhile, some men had been engaged in taking a gate off its hinges; and just as the rest were making their way in frightened groups down the hill in the face of the storm, Sir Basil, Frank Rivers, and Graham lifted Eustace Trevanion on to it with all possible care, and carried him slowly down to where the carriage was waiting.

The landau had been fetched in haste, but the other carriages had not yet come up. Everyone watched in silence whilst the poor



["IF YOU MEAN THAT SIR BASIL HAS DONE ANYTHING TO BE ASHAMED OF, I DON'T BELIEVE IT."]

boy was laid carefully across from one seat to the other, with cushions and soft rugs to secure him as much as possible from all hurt. Then Sir Basil put Flora in, and was about to follow when his cousin tapped him on the shoulder.

"Are you going? Who will drive the break?"

"You. I know you can manage the horses and my aunt won't mind. I must be here; I was responsible for the boy, and how am I to look his guardian in the face?"

"It was not your fault a bit," said Rivers, frankly. "I was a duffer for not being on the look-out, but you saved him."

Flora gave one look up at the stern, handsome face, her eyes swimming with tears of gratitude; then she turned to her brother, and forgot everything else but the silent fear in her heart.

"There is nothing to wait for. Home! Drive slowly over the stones, after that as fast as you can."

Then he leant back and put his hand on the cushion that supported Trevanion's feet, so that it might not stir.

Nesta Rivers clung to her brother's arm sobbing with fright, whilst Philip Fane stood moodily looking after the carriage, with Flora's parasol and one of her long tan gloves in his hand.

All he thought of was the lost opportunity! Whilst he was making no way with the girl whose beauty tortured him, Sir Basil, whom he thought safe for the moment, and perfectly harmless, stepped out of the ground, or dropped down from the clouds, just in time to play the part of a hero, and win the girl's gratitude for ever.

He could not preserve the boy from falling, but he broke the fall, and saved him from being pitched on his head. Eustace must have been killed if Sir Basil had not rushed forward and caught the reins just as the wheel was breaking; for the pony was wild with fright, and would have dragged the

chair, whether upright or topsy-turvy, down to the very bottom, and into the hedge of brambles.

And Flora would be told this as they drove home together, and whatever had come between them that morning would be effaced or forgotten before the sun went down.

Frank Rivers looked up from soothing his sister.

"Do you think there's a chance?"

"Yes, useless cripples are sure to have nine lives," said Philip, brutally. He never could forgive Eustace Trevanion for engrossing his sister's affections, or forming a link between her and Sir Basil; and the bitterness in his heart for once came out in his speech.

"A pity Miss Trevanion can't hear you," cried Rivers, in the flush of his indignation, whilst Nesta raised her little tearful face, and looked as if she could have killed him there and then without remorse.

"And what is to become of me?" inquired Mrs. Fane, plaintively, as she saw the landau in which she had intended to return vanishing before her eyes.

"You are left to my tender mercies, whilst your nephew has profited by the general confusion, and run off with Mr. Willoughby's ward."

"Dear, dear! it would have been much better if I had gone," looking round nervously. "What will Mr. Willoughby say?"

"Make your mind easy, Mrs. Fane," said Rivers, shortly. "When his ward is dying he won't have time to think of the proprieties," and he turned away disgusted.

Emily, Jenny, and Alice Winder stood together, too much shocked to speak, for the catastrophe had shaken them violently out of their dreams of sentiment and frivolity.

"We shall all be killed!" said Mrs. Fane, dolorously, as the horses in the brake, which had just come up, gave a violent plunge in answer to a vivid flash.

Her son got on to the box, and took the reins, and called out to everyone to look

sharp, as the horses wouldn't stand for ever. As it was, he had difficulty in holding them in, in the state of excitement brought on by the storm, and the whole party scrambled into their places as fast as they could, almost tumbling over each other like a flock of sheep going through a gap.

Rivers' chestnut mare stood up on her hind legs, and made Jenny and Mrs. Fane scream, but Nesta sat quite still by his side in the dog-cart; her brave little heart too sad to have room for fear. A determined out between the ears brought the mare down, and the cart sped along at a rattling pace, before the brake had started.

At last it was under weigh, the ladies frightened and pale, the men silent and grave, the horses nervous and fidgety, the sky black as crepe overhead, the thunder growling sullenly, like a wild beast not yet satisfied with its prey.

The spirits which had been so high in the morning had sunk beyond the level of common dulness; the day which had dawned so gorgeously was ending in darkness and gloom.

The landau drove up to the old grey porch of the Abbey before Flora noticed that they had brought her to Greylands instead of to the Firs.

"You will stay here to nurse him, of course," said Sir Basil, and his voice was like that of a kind man speaking to a stranger. "I will send for your things."

She bent her head in assent, willing to stay anywhere, in post-house or dungeon, so that she was not separated from her boy. And so weak is human nature that Sir Basil's heart beat with a wild throb of joy at the thought of having her for week after week under his own roof, and this in spite of his prayer that she might hate him, in spite of his firm resolve that he would never take her to his heart, and make her his own!

(To be continued.)





[WRENCHING HER FINGERS FROM HIS GRASP, JULIET MOVED SWIFTLY FROM HIM.]

## NOVELLETTE.

## FOR EVER AND FOR EVER.

## CHAPTER I.

It was a hot July day, and the sun shone in all his noontide splendour over the streets and lanes of Bath. The abbey rose dim and grey in a background of deep blue sky and fleecy clouds. The Pump-room was filled with elegantly-dressed girls and men; some reading, some chatting, some engaged in watching the folks passing to and from the Roman Baths. In Queen's-square the heat was almost intolerable, and the few children, who had been playing in the garden, had grown weary, and cast themselves on the grass close by the obelisk, or were resting on the benches placed in the shadows made by the weeping ashes.

At an open window, on the drawing-room floor of number eight, sat a young girl, her chin resting in her hollowed palm; her soft, dark eyes, in which there lurked a look of sorrow, watching half-unconsciously the gambols of two terrier puppies. For more than an hour she had sat there motionless and silent, with that same brooding expression on her beautiful face—that same pathetic droop curving her ripe red lips. Now and again some passer-by would glance curiously up at her, and if it were a man the curiosity changed to admiration, of which she was all unconscious.

She was probably not more than twenty, and looked even younger. Her complexion was clear and pale, her eyes large, dark, lustrous, and shadowed by lashes black as the raven's wing. The dark hair low curled upon her temples, and was drawn down upon the fair throat in massive braids.

She was simply and prettily dressed in some pale pink material, trimmed with cream lace, and wore no ornaments, save a little silver brooch in the shape of a Maltese cross.

As she sat dreaming in the noontide splendour there came a knock at her door. She half-turned in her chair, and said, in a soft, clear voice, "Come in," and a neat servant-girl entered.

"If you please, Miss Conway, missus would be glad if you'd step down and take dinner with her. She finds it lonely with Mr. George away."

Juliet Conway rose.

"It is very kind of Mrs. Addison, to remember me. Please say I am happy to accept her invite."

"Yes, miss; and dinner is served now," with which she made her exit.

Miss Conway walked to the mantel, and smoothed her hair before the mirror with her small, white hands, then went down to her landlady's apartments.

Mrs. Addison was the widow of a Baptist minister, who eked out her scanty income by letting lodgings. She had one son—George—who was presently to be ordained, and was a rigid follower of Calvin. Mrs. Addison herself was a pleasant, little woman, with a warm heart; very fond and proud, but also very much afraid of her stern-faced son. She welcomed her lodger cordially as she entered the pretty, cool sitting-room.

"I'm so glad you've come, Miss Conway. It must be very lonely for you upstairs, and I'm sure it is conferring a great favour upon me. I like company, you see; it seems such nonsense to prepare a meal just for oneself."

"I was pleased to come, I assure you. I believe I am inclined to be melancholy to-day, and as I have no lessons to give I have ample leisure to indulge in the mood."

Mrs. Addison looked curiously, yet anxiously at her.

"I wish," she said, "you had some friend or relative with whom you could live. You are too young and lovely to be left so entirely to yourself."

The hot colour flamed into the girl's pale face.

"You flatter me," she said, a trifle coldly, "but pray believe I am quite capable of protecting myself."

"But this such a censorious world, my dear, and your simplest actions are very often purposely and vilely misconstrued."

Miss Conway raised her head, and looked Mrs. Addison very fully in the eyes.

"Have you any special motive for warning me thus?" she asked, and there was a sound of wounded pride in her young voice.

The landlady hesitated, flushed nervously, trifled with her food, then said, abruptly,—

"Yes, my dear, I have; and as you are so young, and so lonely, I think it only motherly to show you wherein your danger lies. Don't be angry with me for speaking plainly; it is for your good."

Miss Conway bowed, and Mrs. Addison went on,—

"The people round here are talking very much about your acquaintance with Mr. Greville Dimsdale. They say you cannot expect he intends marrying you. Pray don't be offended with me; but try, dear, to remember the difference in your station and his. He is heir to a great fortune, and you—"

"I," interrupted the girl, "am only a poor music-teacher. Do my kind friends presume to say more than that?"

"I am afraid so. I know they wonder how and where you first met him. They doubt if you were ever properly introduced."

"I am obliged to them," Miss Conway said, resentfully. "Will you kindly inform all inquirers that I met Mr. Dimsdale at his own home? I was engaged to play at a *soirée* there. And should they require further information pray refer them to me."

"My dear—my dear!" entreatingly, "don't grow bitter about it, or I shall be sorry I spoke. Still, for your own sake, be careful. You know, my child, a good name once lost can never be regained; and don't let your heart go out to this gentleman, who probably is only amusing himself at your expense."

The girl's face had changed curiously. It was as if carved in stone, so set and proud was it.

"Mrs. Addison, is it my fault if Mr. Dimsdale meets and escorts me home? Shall I rudely decline his companionship? I tell you I am so lonely that I am glad to accept any kindness, any friendship. As for loving this man I should find it impossible to do so—I am perfectly indifferent to him."

"That being the case, my dear, I would forget his friendship. If your pupils possess hearts of it, it would probably injure you materially."

"I will remember what you have said, and endeavour to act upon your advice. I shall only be a little more lonely, a little more at enmity with the world."

"Surely, child, you have some friends, some relatives who would be glad to receive you into their home? You would not be a burden to them. Your talent will always stand you in good stead."

Miss Conway flushed deeply.

"I do not know who my parents were, or if Conway is really my name. I tell you this in confidence. When four years old I was left at a seminary in Colchester by a man who claimed to be my father. He paid the first year in advance, and for five years Miss Thorne, the principal, received payment regularly. Then they ceased, and from that day to this I have heard nothing of my supposed parent. Miss Thorne had grown to love me dearly, and so, instead of thrusting me into the world a pauper, she maintained and educated me, never grudging any labour, any expenditure for me. When I was seventeen she died, and it was discovered she left only sufficient to pay all just claims; so once more I was alone. I at once applied for, and obtained, a situation in a family at Rochester, where I remained for more than a year. Afterwards I came to Bath, and of my life since then you know as much as I could tell you."

The elder woman rose and kissed the speaker on her beautiful mouth.

"Poor child!" she said, tearfully, "poor child! You must try to believe that all your good days are to come. It may be you will discover your friends, and so at last be happy. Your story sounds like a romance, and I should not be surprised to hear that you belong to the nobility! Your air is that of a princess. Why do you laugh, Miss Conway?"

"Because your words sound ironical. It may be I am the child of shame, and certainly I never expect to be claimed by anyone. It is extremely likely I was left to the mercy of strangers in the hope that eventually I should be lost."

"If you please, miss," said the maid's voice, "you're wanted."

"Who is it, Ann?"

"The parson, m'as'm. I showed him into the parlour."

"Pray excuse me, Miss Conway. I am so sorry," began Mrs. Addison, but Miss Conway interrupted.

"There is no need for ceremony between us; and I shall go into the park for an hour or two."

She went up to her room then, and stood a moment calmly contemplating her own face in an opposite mirror; then suddenly her composure broke down, and flinging her arms high above her head she cried, in the bitterness of her soul, "I wish I were dead! I wish I were dead!"

She sank into a heap upon the floor, and bowed her head between her hands.

"Oh! my love, my love!" she moaned, "why were you so cruelly false? Oh! can it be you never loved me at all? Why am I so weak a woman that I love you still, when I should hate you?"

She lifted her face then, and a grim smile curved her lips.

"Greville Dimsdale!" she said, scornfully.

"No, my love is not for him. And yet, it would be good to know even he cared for me. I

want rest and the protection a man alone can give."

She ceased, and sat with her hands tightly clasped, until the sound of a dimpled German band below aroused her from her stupor.

"This is fearful."

And she rose, smoothed the folds of her dress, brushed her hair, and putting on hat and gloves went out.

She passed down one side of the square, and by Queen's-parade, and from thence into the Royal Victoria Park.

It was not quite so thronged as usual, there being a fête at Sydney Gardens, and she walked unmolested and unmolested until she had passed the first bed of acacia and white roses, with its fringe of nobilia.

She crossed the grass, and selected a chair under a large chestnut, almost facing the bandstand, and drawing a handy edition of *Hamlet* from her pocket began to read. But there was such a hum of voices, such constant passing and re-passing of carriages, that she could not concentrate her attention on the play, and finally closed the book, and tried to take an interest in the scene around.

Once she turned her head and looked in the direction of the Royal Crescent, where the Dimsdales were then living, and thought drearily if, after all, it would be well to force the errand here Greville had for her. Surely with wealth and pleasure, and his protecting care she might be happy and forget the past and the man whose face and voice haunted her day and night! But how could she tell that Greville Dimsdale wished to marry her? He had often spoken in travelled words of love, but as yet he had not been bidden marriage; and her cheeks began to glow, her eyes to flash with strange fire.

She was very rudely aroused from her thoughts. A young man of the detestable species called masquer had long been intent upon her lovely face. At last he rose, and took a chair beside her, then leaning forward said,—

"We are both alone—or let me—er—have the pleasure of your society."

The girl rose, all the hot indignant blood flooding her face and throat. She gave one glance at him full of mingled rage and scorn, and turned to go. He caught her hand.

"Don't go, sweetheart."

And as he spoke a carriage rolled slowly by. Wrenching her fingers from his grasp, Juliet moved swiftly from him; and lifting her eyes met the stern regard of Greville Dimsdale. His sister was with him, and as the girl's eyes looked from one face to the other they rested on that of the third occupant of the carriage. Involuntarily her hand strayed to her heart, and her face grew ashen in its pallor.

She did not return Dimsdale's frigid recognition or notice his sister's look of scorn; she only saw that one face, those flashing eyes, and all the rest was forgotten.

As in a dream she paused, and watched them until she could see them no longer, then began slowly to retrace her steps.

Once more her persecutor was beside her.

"Why are you so coy?" he questioned, with languid insolence.

The face that turned upon him was terrible in its rage and anguish.

"Why will you persist in following me?" she cried, through her clenched teeth. "Have a care that you do not drive me to madness."

The imbecile grin died from about his weak, sensual mouth, and something like shame stirred at his heart as he looked on this lovely, defenceless girl, who faced him like a tigress driven to bay.

He stammered an incoherent apology, and turned away.

One moment she stood watching him, the misery in her eyes deepening. Then she went swiftly homewards, and up to her own room, where she cried bitterly to one she called "Mark," imploring him to return, entreating he would think no evil of her, tormenting herself always with wondering what had brought

him to Bath, and if Rana Dimsdale could be the attraction.

Meanwhile that young lady, leaning back amongst the cushions, spoke in clear, cold tones that vibrated through the summer air, and irritated her brother not a little.

"Why did you recognize that girl, Greville?" she questioned, lazily. "You saw how she was engaged, and now perhaps, you will credit the rumour that she has touched us of her diplomacy and dissimulation?"

Greville Dimsdale frowned.

"I believe nothing but good of Miss Conway. The fellow was probably impertinent to her, and she seemed to be resenting his conduct."

"Because she had seen our approach," answered Mr. Vavasour, the girl has the misfortune to be acquainted with the lovely. She is a charming creature, and I engaged her a short time since for a soirée. She is fascinated with me, and Greville, and through their influence she has obtained membership of the committee. But her propriety will be preserved unless she changes her bearing very considerably. It is very strange, too, that she should live alone."

"Miss Conway is an orphan, Rana."

"So far as we know," with an ill-disguised sneer. "Mr. Vavasour," turning to the young man with a bright smile, "you must not think me so unjust or unnecessarily harsh. You must remember that no true woman can countenance vice or frivolity."

"Still, Miss Dimsdale, at the same time one should remember that appearances are often deceitful, and that charity is a good thing—in fact, the greatest of all the virtues."

The girl's long lashes drooped upon her flushed cheeks, as she said softly,—

"You have given me a grave rebuke, and I thank you," but she dared not lift her eyes lest Mark Vavasour should see the anger in them.

No more was said upon the subject, and the remainder of the drive apparently was pleasant to all.

When they returned to Royal Crescent there was scarcely time to dress for dinner, and yet Mark lingered on his way to the dining-room, his face hard and stern, his eyes full of angry scorn.

"After all," he muttered, "it was well. Juliet Conway would have been no fit wife for me—she would have wrecked my happiness, and perhaps dishonoured my name. It will be wiser to marry a woman in my own station, Rana Dimsdale, for instance. She is pretty, fairly good-tempered, and, I think, partial to me. I will consider the matter. It is high time I settled down."

And he went down to laugh and jest with the assembled guests, whilst the girl he had loved, and still loved, to whom he had been cruel, knelt in her room with hidden face, and writhing form, sobbing out his name in every endearing term, and in her anguish there was no one to speak a comforting word, none to catch her close, to kiss and soothe her.

She was alone, and her heart grew hard within her. As the twilight came on she rose and looked from the window. Fleecy golden and purple clouds were moving slowly along the deep blue sky, and the distant hills were violet through the evening mist. Far and wide stretched the lovely land, and the air was full of the breath of flowers. The breeze murmured through the trees, and the sound of childish laughter came to her through the open window. She made a passionate gesture in protest against the loveliness and happiness around.

"I, only I, am miserable!" she said, vehemently. "What was my parents' sin that it should be visited so heavily upon me?"

But the following day she went about her duties with proud, calm face, and inscrutable eyes; bore patiently the stupidity of her pupils, and prevented the patronage of the half-educated parents by her cold and dignified bearing.

She was not a general favourite, by any means; she was too proud, too reticent ever



to be that, and there was an old experience in her life which had made her very bitter against all the world, and terribly distrustful.

Lately she had begun to notice a marked difference in the regard of her pupils' parents, and, before Mrs. Addison gave her warning and advice, she knew full well what it meant.

She had overheard one over-dressed matron say to her favourite gossip, "I should send Amelia elsewhere to pursue her musical studies; only Miss Conway is cheaper and cleverer than anybody I know in the profession; still, if she is not more circumspect in her conduct—you understand?"

"Oh, perfectly! Then there is some truth in the reports I have heard?"

"Yes; why she is to be seen any evening in the park with Mr. Dimdale."

Juliet had been too proud to give the lie to the words, or even to acknowledge she had overheard them; and perhaps her very silence had the effect of deepening her resentment. However that might be, she was daily growing harder and bitterer; more and more at enmity with mankind.

She had felt grateful to Greville Dimdale for his kindness, because it was a new thing in her experience to be treated with consideration; but now her heart was hot against him, because his very friendliness had made her name the subject of vulgar gossip.

So that morning, when returning to her lodgings, she saw him coming towards her from an opposite direction, she quickened her steps, hoping to escape him.

He was not blind to her motive, but neither was he to be thwarted, so he hastened after her, and easily overtook her.

She turned, flushed and angry, upon him, but waited for him to speak.

There was an ominous flash in his brown eyes as he asked,—

"Why did you try to avoid me, Miss Conway?"

"For a reason which I do not choose to give," she answered, coldly. "I have yet to learn that I am answerable to Mr. Dimdale for my conduct."

She began to walk on, and he kept pace beside her.

"Has that most attractive specimen of manhood, with whom I saw you yesterday, superseded me in your friendship?"

"Do you not mean acquaintance? Pray pardon the correction."

Greville Dimdale flushed dusky.

"I had hoped you considered me in the light of a friend, and am consequently hurt to find I am nothing to you. Allow me to give you one little piece of advice—if you wish to be happy, do not trust your life to such a creature as you were favouring yesterday."

He lifted his hat, and would have left her, but for once Juliet Conway's pride and reticence deserted her.

"Stay, Mr. Dimdale, if you please; perhaps I spoke with unnecessary bitterness, but I have had much to trouble me lately."

As the first pleading notes of the sweet voice broke on his ear he halted, and the expression of his face wholly changed.

She went on, hurriedly,—

"The man you saw beside me was seriously annoying me. I went to the park yesterday, hoping there to be quiet and unmolested, but that creature took a chair beside me, and endeavoured to engage me in conversation. As I rose to free myself from his persecutions you passed, and I knew, by the expression on your face and your sister's, that you thought me guilty of a vulgar flirtation with a perfect stranger, who had nothing to recommend him but his immaculate clothes."

The young man drew nearer to her. Had he been Mark Vavasour, he would probably have felt some lingering doubt of her truth; but being Greville Dimdale, he implicitly believed her words, and held out his hand as a proof of his trust.

But Juliet refused to place hers in it, saying, with a bitter laugh, that they were in a public street, and open to observation.

There was such an alteration in her manner towards him, such constraint in her voice, and in every gesture, that he asked,—

"Has anyone been saying unpleasant things of our—our friendship? Your manner causes me to hazard this guess. Ah! I see by your face that it is true."

She did not deny that, but her lips quivered a moment, and a burning blush rose to her brow. They were close to St. Michael's church, and the gate of the gloomy little burying-ground stood open.

"Come in here," Greville said, authoritatively. "We can talk better."

She obeyed without a word, and he closed the gate behind her.

One or two people from the busy street looked curiously after them, and then went their way.

There was a weeping ash at the far end of the ground, and under it a seat to which Greville led her, and sitting down beside her remarked that they were now well-screened from view.

After that, neither seemed in a hurry to begin any conversation, and Juliet listened in a dreamy way to the noise and bustle of the streets, the clattering of hoofs, the rumbling of wheels on the wooden roads, and felt in her shady corner that she was in the world, but not of it.

She started, when Greville at length addressed her, and her pale face appeared to grow paler under the flickering shadows of the leaves.

"Tell me what has happened since we last met?"

"I have been warned to avoid you," she answered, steadily and unflinchingly. "I have been told that nothing but ill could result to me from a friendship with you; the immense gulf between us has been pointed out to me—I should have seen it unaided. My name is bandied from month to month by women who are wives and mothers, and yet have no pity on my loneliness. Mr. Dimdale, as you are a gentleman, you will not attempt to meet me again. I cannot afford to tarnish my reputation—it is my only possession."

She ceased, and the young man had grown grave and pale. He loved her so well, he could not deny himself the daily sight of and speech with her; but he was not prepared to risk the loss of home and fortune without due consideration.

So he was silent awhile, striving to discover some way of meeting her that would compromise neither her nor himself. That was difficult to do, and he gave up the attempt with a sigh; then with a burst of genuine feeling he caught her hand, saying,—

"I will try to obey you (although it is hard) so far as this. I will not waylay you any more; further I will not promise. If I meet you accidentally I cannot forego the happiness of speaking with you; and always remember, in your loneliest and darkest hours, that I am your friend."

Perhaps for a moment, as she drew her fingers from his clasp, she was disappointed he had not offered her his love; in her sense of utter desolation she was all too ready to seize any chance of happiness, however small, and, womanlike, she felt the need of a good man's protecting care.

"You are very kind," she said, slowly and drearily. "I was afraid I should vex you with my plain speech, but you have borne it very patiently. Now, if you please, I will go home—and alone. I must not be seen with you again."

"Juliet," the young man said, possessing himself once more of her hand. "Juliet, I cannot let you go—so miserable, so forlorn."

"I am Miss Conway to you!" she cried, with sudden fierceness. "Would you, too, take advantage of my defencelessness? Were I in your own rank you would not be guilty of such familiarity."

"I beg your pardon; but between friend and friend there should be no ceremony."

Her lip curved a trifle scornfully.

"I am learning to doubt all friendship—especially that of men. Now let me go—good-morning."

"Let it be good-bye; who can tell when we shall stand together again?" he asked, gloomily.

"Good-bye," she answered, so indifferently that she wounded him.

"Tell me," he urged, holding her hand still; "have you a lover?"

"That question savours of curiosity," smiling faintly; "but I will answer it—I have no lover, I never had."

"Thank Heaven for that! Juliet," but she was gone.

## CHAPTER II.

MARK VAVASOUR walked through the Pump-room on his way to the Roman Baths, which had but recently been discovered. Some men he knew were lounging there, and one or two girls looked up from their novels to give him a smiling greeting; but he was not in the mood for conversation of any sort, and so went his way with indifference that was very gallant to more than one prettily-dressed maiden.

As he neared the spiral staircase leading to the Baths he confronted Rana Dimdale, faultlessly dressed (if regarded from a Parisian standard). He felt annoyed; for he wished to be alone; but he had spent too much of his life in polite society not to be able to disguise that fact. Rana was flushed, and looked disturbed, but when she met his glance her grey eyes brightened, and she smiled as she joined him.

"Mr. Vavasour, I supposed you were in your room indulging in a siesta."

"And I believed you to be enjoying yourself in Greville's society."

Rana made a disdainful moue; then with a slow and contemptuous gesture she said,—

"Go down and see how he is engaged." Mr. Vavasour, I am sadly disappointed in him. I believed him to be above the vices and follies of the ordinary young man."

Mark Vavasour felt somewhat astounded by her implication, and very much inclined to re-enter the Pump-room. Why should he play the spy? and Greville Dimdale was old enough to remember his own interests. But Rana took his arm and looked into his face entreatingly.

"Come with me," she said, softly; "help me to save my brother from a worthless woman's wiles."

She looked so pretty, so pleading, that he could not refuse to obey her evident wish; so he descended the stairs with her, and passed by the bath-rooms, along the hot and narrow passage, and came at last to the newly-discovered Roman Baths.

The air was damp and earthy there. He looked up, and saw a few people in the street above, regarding Rana and himself with curious eyes; then he noticed an official, who was talking volubly to an elderly couple, and exhibiting a "Guide to the Baths."

He glanced into the green water, teeming with gold fish; under the dark arches, and at last his eyes turned to a little nook where chairs were placed, and he saw two figures that seemed familiar to him.

"Come," said Rana, "see and judge for yourself, if the girl he affects is a fitting companion for him; and pray remember always your opinion has great weight with my brother."

Mark smiled somewhat cynically, and said,—

"I don't set up for a teacher of morality," he answered, whilst his heart beat thick and fast, because as her drew nearer to Greville Dimdale and the girl he was convinced she was none other than Juliet Conway.

At the sound of their steps Greville turned, and flushed dusky when he saw who was Rana's companion; then stooping over his companion he said a few words, which caused her to turn her white, proud face upon them with a curiously intent regard.

She seemed perfectly at ease, met Rana's

eyes with clear and steady scrutiny, then she bowed slightly; but Miss Dimsdale refused to acknowledge her.

Embarrassed, and somewhat awkward in his embarrassment, Greville Dimsdale accosted Mark as he would have passed them.

"Stay, Vavasour; let me introduce you to my friend, Miss Conway."

Then those two, who had known each other in the seemingly far away past, who perhaps had loved each other with the whole force of their individual natures, bowed and murmured commonplace words; whilst Greville, watching, read nothing of their story, and wondered a little at the disapproval in Mark's eyes.

Rana had moved to a short distance, and stood with frowning brow, looking into the green and stagnant water; when Vavasour rejoined her, she turned to him quickly.

"Take me away from here," she said, with a flash of passion. "I am disgusted with everything; and I had counted on your support, instead of which you go over and ally yourself to the enemy."

"I should be glad to learn in what I have failed you, that I may rectify my error."

At his calmness of voice and manner Rana was conscious only of bitter rebellion, and the longing in her heart to win him to herself, made her unreasonably angry and jealous. Her great, grey eyes were bright with pain, and her tones were sharp as she answered,—

"You know your fault; it was an insult to me to quit me for that woman; but a man will forgive a beautiful woman any fault."

"Do you grudge her her beauty?" he questioned, coldly; "seeing she has nothing else I count her very poor."

They had left the Pump-room and now faced a pretty stone fountain covered with ivy. In an uninterested way Mark watched one or two passers-by lazily stay to sip the hot mineral water, and he was not a little startled when Rana said, vehemently,—

"I wish I could stir you out of your calm; I wish I could make you suffer pain as others suffer, so that you might fall to the common level and feel sympathy, for common sufferings."

She was very white, and her eyes were almost black with the passion which for awhile seemed to consume her; she had halted on the kerb, and some acquaintances driving by glanced at each other and laughed significantly when she did not return their salutations.

"Too absorbed in Vavasour, and it's evident he won't rise to the bite," said one young man of sporting propensities.

Mark was keenly alive to all that passed, which alone was plain proof he did not love his pretty companion; he laid his hand upon her arm and drew her across the road. Then he said,—

"You should not complain so bitterly of my stoicism, Miss Dimsdale; it is a man's only mask in the present day. Neither should you accuse me of being influenced by mere physical beauty. No woman, however lovely, could retain my regard unless she reserved her favours for me and me only."

"Surely you must have known 'such an one?' she questioned, flushing vividly; and for a moment met the grave, cold eyes with a passionate glance, and knew in that little space that he had read her heart, and vowed within herself to win him or to die.

Mark had long guessed her partiality to him, but he had not realised until then that he was dearer to her than any man, or any prize the world could give. He was shocked and, consequently, silent awhile; and so they wandered on mechanically, and as by mutual consent, passed Juliet's home and entered the park.

They sat down under a silver birch, and whilst Mark was struggling to forget her look and her tone, Rana had recovered her ordinary manner, and so was first to speak.

"Mr. Vavasour," she said, gently, "I am very foolish; advise me what to do for Greville. I cannot tamely see him fall a prey

to an artful woman; remember, he is my only brother, and I love him."

Her voice sank into almost a whisper at the last words, and Mark was not wholly untouched by her solicitude for his friend, but he answered, gravely,—

"You ask me a very difficult thing, Miss Dimsdale, and I should prefer having nothing to do with the matter. Still, your will is my law, and if I can help you I will; but first, are you perfectly sure you are judging Miss Conway justly? By her beauty and education she is Greville's equal. Would he be sacrificing himself by a marriage with her?"

"Yes, yes! she is not a good girl! she is no fit wife for him!"

She spoke quietly, but her heart was sore with dread lest Mark, too, should fall a victim to Juliet's beauty; and she could not guess how every word she spoke in dispraise of the girl steeled him against herself. Had he not loved her once, and if she had proved herself unworthy, could he wholly forget what she had been to him just two years ago? Now he said, stroking his moustache, meditatively,—

"If you have warned Greville of his folly, and disclosed to him what you know to Miss Conway's discredit, I think you can do no more. True, you could acquaint your father with these facts, but an informer's is not a very pleasant character to contemplate, and Greville has seen enough of the world to be on his guard."

Her long lashes rested on her flushed cheeks, her lips were tremulous.

"I might have known in what manner you would meet my appeal, Mr. Vavasour, but I was foolish enough to imagine you different to other men. I have only been absurdly mistaken."

"What is it you would have me say or do?" mere sharply than she had ever heard him speak. "If your woman's wit," almost sneeringly, "can invent a plan by which Greville may be honourably saved from a *misalliance*, for Heaven's sake disclose it."

Rana shrank from him afraid and cruelly wounded, and when Mark saw that the better part of his nature was moved to pity.

"Forgive me, Miss Dimsdale. I spoke too harshly. But I, too, have my troubles and perplexities, and am afraid that they have made me (for the time) a most unsympathetic listener and ally."

"May I know your anxieties?" she questioned softly, and laid her small gloved hand upon his.

He looked down at her with a gentler expression. The sunlight gleamed in her eyes, and on her pretty, fair brown hair. Her face was flushed and tender, and he was tempted just a moment to say the words which would bind him irrevocably to her. Only there flashed before his mental vision a dark, pale face, with glorious, passionate eyes, which had surely once spoken love to him. He lifted Rana's hand with his own, and clasped it close.

"My trouble was the result of my own folly. I elect to bear it alone, but I am grateful to you for your sympathy, and glad of your friendship."

Her friendship! Was she not waiting to give him her love? Oh, why was he so blind—so unwilling to accept what she would so gladly give? The flush slowly died from her face, the light from her eyes; but as she rose and shook out her dainty skirts, she said, almost tenderly,—

"Of my friendship you may always be certain—and my sympathy. Now, let us go home; the heat has fatigued me."

They walked slowly back, and when at last Rana found herself in her room, she slid to the floor in a passion of anguish.

"Love, oh, love!" she said in a weary tone, "when will you turn to me? When will you see how dear you are to me? How cruel you have made life to me! Other men pay court to me, other men admire me, but you—oh! you stand always aloof! Mark, Mark! am I

not fair enough to win your heart! Alas! alas! if it is already given."

She started to her feet, and surveyed herself in an opposite pier-glass. She was undeniably pretty, and she was clever enough to be very fascinating; and yet—and yet he did not love her. The thought was intolerable. She sat down, resting her dimpled elbow upon a table, her chin dropped in her hollowed palm. She was very wretched, but she did not weep or groan; her heart was too hot and angry to allow of any such weakness. Suddenly she clenched the hand that hung by her side, and a deep crimson burned on cheek and brow.

"He shall love me," she muttered, in a harsh voice. "I will stay at nothing to win him for myself."

Then she rang for her maids, and began her toilet for the evening. When her hair had been coiled in heavy braids on the crown of her head, after the present absurd fashion, and she stood arrayed in a dress of some shimmering, pale blue material, the jewels on throat and wrists, she was fair enough to gladden any man's heart, and felt triumphantly that no guest of her father's that night would be as lovely as she. So she went down with smiling lips and bright eyes to play her part—to stake her all for Mark's love; and inwardly she said,—

"In the end I must win!"

Whilst she laughed and talked, whilst she sang her prettiest, gayest songs, the woman who was her rival sat lonely in her quiet and rapidly-darkening room—not weeping, not praying, scarcely moving, because the pain in heart was too great for any demonstration. So she sat torturing herself with thoughts of the past—maddening her brain with memories of "dead love, dead faith, dead hope."

With Juliet the three succeeding days wore out slowly and heavily; her duties were many, her pleasures so few. She was so weary and so desolate that each night, when she laid down upon her bed, she prayed she might wake no more to the bright sunshine, and the world that seemed so fair to others and was so cruel to her. Each morning she awoke with the thought, "May this day be my last."

On the fourth she won a little respite from labour, and as she sat reading in the pleasant room she called her own Mrs. Addison entered.

"You're not engaged to-day, Miss Conway, and I thought, perhaps, you would like to accompany me to the Floral Fête at Sydney Gardens. A friend has sent me two tickets. Will you go?"

"I shall be very glad. It is kind of you to remember me."

"Not at all. I like you so much I thought I would give you the refusal of the ticket. I could not have a pleasanter companion."

At two o'clock they started for the gardens, Mrs. Addison looking very comely in her black silk gown and silver grey bonnet, Juliet lovelier, if possible, than in her everyday attire.

She wore a white delaine with small sprays of crimson berries and bronze leaves worked upon it, with ribbons to match, and a great white hat, from under which her eyes gleamed like stars. She was young, and had a vast capacity for enjoyment; so that, despite her troubles, she could give herself up for a time to this unexpected pleasure.

They entered the gardens, to find them gay with goodly company, sweet with the scent of multitudinous flowers, whilst, to add to the general enjoyment, a first-class band had been procured.

They made a tour of the tents, and then finding a seat under a weeping ash listened dreamily to Tosti's "For ever and for ever" until the pathos of the melody revived all Juliet's saddest memories, and she was fain to cry out for silence.

"After all," she thought, "it was foolish to expect any pleasure, since, wherever I go, all things round me speak of Mark."

Then she flushed hotly as she saw Rana Dimsdale pass with two gentlemen, to whom



she was evidently speaking of Juliet, and, to judge by her expression, and the insolent way in which the young men stared at her rival, Rana's remarks were disparaging ones. Miss Conway clenched her hands, and half hissed through her set teeth,—

"That woman is my enemy. It will be well if she never needs mercy of me."

"My dear, my dear!" remonstrated Mrs. Addison, "you must not say or look such things. You positively frighten me."

Juliet laughed in an abashed way.

"It was foolish to openly express my thoughts," she said. You will oblige me if you can forget them."

A voice beside her said,—

"Good morning, Miss Conway. This is an unexpected meeting."

Her face, which had been flushed, grew ashen in its pallor; even her lips were white, out she contrived to say quietly,—

"This gentleman is an old acquaintance, Mrs. Addison. Allow me to introduce you."

Mrs. Addison looked nervously from one to the other; and Juliet, impressed with a sudden sense of bitter irony, smiled at her confusion as she presented Mark Vavasour to her. At a little distance stood Rana, watching with fierce, angry eyes, and a face marred by hate and pain.

"I have something to say to you, Miss Conway. Will you grant me a few moments' private conversation. I will not keep you long from your pleasure."

His eyes and his voice alike were coldly cruel. Just a moment Juliet hesitated, then she met Rana's glance.

"She loves him, too!" she thought, and the thought decided her. "Stay here until I return," she said to Mrs. Addison, and taking Mark's proffered arm, passed with him through the crowds of brilliantly-dressed women and their attendant cavaliers, conscious that she had struck her enemy the first blow.

Again she almost laughed, felt even a dreary amusement in her own madness and foolish love, and when Vavasour addressed her she lifted her face with a carelessly defiant expression.

"I can't talk to you here," he said, half sullenly. "Let us go to the Abbey."

"As you will," indifferently; "it is but a little way."

They passed out of the gates, and she immediately dropped his arm.

"There is no occasion to proceed in such an extremely *Darby* and *Joan* fashion," she said, in a curiously hard tone.

"I agree with you," he answered, biting his lip with anger.

They reached the Abbey. The doors were left wide open, and only a solitary verger hovered about. Mark led the way to the chancel, where they could be out of the verger's earshot. Juliet sank into a chair, and looked up from toying with her sunshade.

"Well," she asked, languidly, "why have you brought me here?"

He seemed to struggle for calmness for a moment, then he answered, "That I might speak to you for the last time."

"It was surely unnecessary to take me from my friend for such a purpose?"

"I think not, Miss Conway, and before you send me away let me tell you something of what you have done for me—of what you have made me suffer."

Something in his tone arrested her cold response. She had loved him once, she loved him now, and was willing to forget his past cruelty, and be to him what once she was, if only he desired it. Her softened eyes sought his with mute entreaty. He put out his hand as if he feared she would draw nearer.

"Don't look at me like that!" he said, noisily. "You make me forget what is due to myself. You almost teach me disbelief of facts which I have proved by the evidence of my own senses."

Again she was the cold, disdainful woman. "Go on," she remarked, haughtily. "I had

expected something of this nature. I have seen many men since we parted that July night two years ago."

"It is unnecessary to tell me that, Miss Conway. You have fooled many a poor wretch since then with your beauty, your tender glances, your lowered tones and modest air. You have grown lovelier and outwardly more womanly in the last two years, but your loveliness is a curse to yourself and others."

She rose and faced him.

"Have a care," she whispered intensely. "I am less forbearing, less forgiving, since then. The wrong you did me—a helpless, friendless girl—is not forgotten. It rankles here—with one finger touching her bosom with a sort of piteous self-scorn."

"I thank Heaven," here joined, "that I went away as I did; for not even my love could survive the facts with which I have become acquainted."

"Go on," she said, with terrible composure. "If you were a man you would pity me; do not pause to choose your words."

"I could scarcely believe the story they told me of you."

She interrupted him fiercely,—

"By *they* I presume you mean Miss Dimsdale and others of her set. Well, it is all true."

At what he thought her shameless avowal of her frivolity he shrank back from her.

"I was a pauper, I lived by charity; I am ignorant of my very parentage; truly, all things considered, I am an undesirable acquaintance. I don't know how the facts have leaked out. I scarcely care now"—and just a moment her voice faltered—"It is enough for me to know you are ashamed of all that has passed, that you desire to remain a stranger to me (as you have done for two years). Let it be so. It is best for us both. In time, perhaps, I shall reciprocate your hate as I do your scorn. Is there anything left you to say?"

His eyes were no longer cold. The fire of love shone in them, and his expression was one of keenest anguish. Juliet did not see that. Once more she had sunk into a chair, and bent her gaze persistently on the floor. Mark Vavasour sat down beside her, and spoke in a penetrating, but laboured voice.

"For my own sake, I wish we had never met."

"It would have been better for both," she retorted, swiftly. "I hoped until the last few days that our paths lay wide apart. The world should be large enough for each to miss the other. I trusted I should never look on you, or converse with you again, because—because your presence hurts me. It recalls too vividly those months we spent at the Washingtons."

"Ah!" he said, with an indrawn sign, "I am inclined to believe you then possessed some remnant of your innocence and artlessness. I hope so, for my own sake. It would be cruelly humiliating to know I loved so false a creature, as now I feel you are."

She reared her head high and met his miserable regard with flashing scorn.

"If I have erred—if I erred then—what was my fault to yours, Mark Vavasour? Who is the greater culprit, you or I? Ah! tell me that?" She leaned so near that her warm breath fanned his cheek. She laughed as he shrank back. "You too, are changed," she said; "You are afraid to meet my glance, because you know how cruelly you wronged me. What if I had my secret, was your whole heart open to me? No, no, no! you were like the rest of men, soon weary of a creature so credulous as then I was."

"For Heaven's sake," Mark pleaded, "do not destroy all faith in me; do not try by any mean evasions and sentimental rant to cast the onus of this thing upon me. I loved you then, I would have married you. I desired nothing so much as to make you my wife, but now, seeing you as you are I cannot link my fate with yours."

"Nobody asked you, sir," she said, quoted Juliet, with a flippancy of manner that her eyes and her face made ghastly and terrible.

Mark started up.

"There is nothing left for us but to say good-bye," he muttered; "but for your last speech perhaps I could have overlooked all. Men are invariably fools where women are concerned."

"Why air such a palpable fact?" she questioned, with languid insolence. "Are you waiting to take me back to Mrs. Addison? Pray do not think that necessary. I hate compulsory courtesy, and am used to walking alone. Ah! well, if you are going, good-bye."

He glanced swiftly round; the verger had walked into the street, wondering a little what errand had brought those two together to the Abbey. Mark turned, caught her in his arms, and kissed her in speechless madness and anguish of soul.

She did not resent the caress; she seemed incapable then of anger, but she gently put him away, and standing a pace from him, said,—

"Had you been true I had been a better woman. As it is you have made me what I am," her voice and her manner changed then.

"For all my worldly wisdom, for all my bitterness of thought and feeling, I thank you. When you have time for reflection let these words of mine weigh upon you and disturb your peace. I loved you in the old days at Rochester. You were a hero to me; but since then—well, since then I have learned many things, and among them this—that he who taught me love, he whom I worshipped, was one of a very false majority. You can go now, and if Mrs. Addison meets you and asks for me, say I am coming, that I have stayed in the town to make a purchase. Do you hear me—go! Oh! that I should hate as once I loved you!"

So he turned and went from her presence; and she, like a wounded thing crept to the altar rails, and, kneeling, hid her face, but neither prayed nor wept, for she was far beyond prayers or tears then.

Lower and lower she sank upon the steps, shivering as if with cold. Her thoughts dwelt in the past, and her heart's whole cry was for Mark, the man she had met in such a bitter mood.

In her shame and humiliation she forgot all her surroundings, saw nothing, heard nothing; and she started with a low, wild cry when a hand was laid upon her shoulder, and a man's voice asked, gently,—

"Are you ill, or in trouble. Can I help you?"

She lifted her head from the altar rails, slowly and wearily, and met the pitying regard of a middle-aged clergyman. At first she could not speak, and he said, quickly and half-apologetically,—

"Pardon my apparent presumption, and believe if I can assist you I will. I have daughters who may one day need sympathy."

Slowly Juliet rose to her feet.

"You are kind," she murmured, with her hand pressed hard upon her heart. "You are very kind, but you cannot help me—no one can. Can you give me back old faith, old hope? can you make me a happy woman? I think I must be mad to speak thus to a stranger! Oh! why did you come here? Let me go, I cannot bear questioning, and even sympathy is hateful to me now!"

He fell back and allowed her to pass.

The verger looked after her with curious eyes.

"A lover's quarrel," he said, inwardly; "and she looks as if she meant suicide."

She went swiftly through the streets, unconscious that her beauty and her evident agitation made her the cynosure of all eyes, and at last reached Sydney Gardens, where she found Mrs. Addison in a state of anxiety, for she had seen Mark return alone.

"My dear," she said, deprecatingly, "have you acted with prudence?"

"Yes," swiftly; "that man was once my lover, he deceived me, and so to-day we thought it well to make our parting final. Say nothing about it."

## CHAPTER III.

RANA DIMSDALE's heart was full of envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness, as she sat alone the day following the Floral Fête; it was humiliating enough to know that Juliet Conway was her superior in beauty and accomplishments, and worse than humiliating to feel her brother had been bewitched by a woman who was socially so much his inferior. And now the crowning trouble had come; Mark had spent the greater part of his afternoon in her society, and returning to his party had been *distract*, and even discourteous. Was her wonderful beauty already working upon him?

"Oh!" cried Rana, in a tempest of tears, "she shall not win him from me. He is mine by my love; in time he must turn to me! Mark! oh, Mark! if only you knew how my heart yearns towards you!"

A desperate resolve came to her to win him at any cost; she set her teeth and clenched her hands in her angry pain. The fitful colour flushed her face or left it pale; her great, grey eyes burned with inward fire. And as she set forming plans against her rival's happiness and honour, a sudden thought came to her. She was not a woman to let "the grass grow under her feet," so she turned the thought into action, and rising went swiftly and softly to Greville's room. She knocked for admission, which she readily obtained, for the young man had become weary of his own society, Mark having gone out to a place called Mangotfield, to visit some friends.

"Greville," Rana said, with well-assumed diffidence, "I want to speak to you about Miss Conway."

The young man flushed.

"If you've come from the governor to plead with me against her you may as well spare yourself the trouble. I marry Juliet Conway or no other woman."

"I begin to admire your constancy, Greville, and to think there must be much good in her to win you so utterly to her. But by perfectly straight ways you can never win her; and so I have come to volunteer my advice and help."

The sunlight entered the room and surrounded the pretty figure, transformed her brown hair to sunny gold. She looked so childish, so innocent, as she stood with loosely-clasped hands, that the young man bent and kissed her.

"My dear," he said, "I am glad you have changed your opinion; sit down, and let us talk together," and he placed a seat for her.

In her heart she laughed scornfully, but her face was placid, and Greville was easily deceived by her.

"Do you know?" she questioned, with well-simulated concern, "that you have a rival in Mark Vavasour, and a very subtle one. To you he pretends not to admire or esteem Miss Conway, but it is otherwise. If you had not been engaged with the Swannells yesterday you would have seen him leave the grounds with Miss Conway. He was absent a long time."

"Stop, Rana; you can't mean this. Only the other day he warned me not to marry a woman inferior to me in rank, and so impressed me with his arguments that I half foreswore Juliet."

"You blind boy!" said Rana, crossing his hair with her jewelled fingers, "Mr. Vavasour doubtless laughed at your credulity."

"By Jove!" cried Greville, starting up; "if I thought he meant mischief I would—but I forgot, Rana, you are partial to him."

She laughed lightly. "He is pleasant, handsome, and a good party. I suppose I must marry one day—why not Mark Vavasour?"

"Then it would not hurt you much if we quarrelled, sis? There are other men as eligible as he."

"You are very foolish, Greville. A rupture between you and your rival would put you in the wrong and make him appear an ill-used

and interesting man, so that Miss Conway would probably ignore you and learn to care for him. Let me show you a wiser mode of procedure. You know as well as I that there have been some reports recently not quite to Miss Conway's credit; I, myself, believed them once, but not now. By hints and innuendoes one can do much, and remain undiscovered, too. My advice to you is, rest whilst others work; leave the management of this affair to me. So long as Juliet Conway can hold her own against the world, she will go on hoping one day to be Mr. Vavasour's wife, and entirely ignoring your prior claim. I saw that in her face yesterday. I am sure she feels towards him already as she does to none other. Let him once think her false and flippant, and he will give up all intercourse with her—you know how proud a man he is! Well, when we have effected this, when he turns from her, and folks show by coldness and averted looks that they think but lightly of her, you can step in and plead your own cause; she will be glad to listen then."

"And do you suppose," Greville demanded, angrily, "I should wish my wife's name to be the subject of common and scandalous talk?"

"You are very stupid," Rana said, impatiently; "the mere fact that you marry her will show to all that the reports were unfounded."

He hesitated a moment; then said,—

"I will rely upon your woman's wit," and was blind to the look of triumph in Rana's eyes.

"New you are acting wisely; but you must go further. You must lead Mr. Vavasour to believe you are disgusted with Miss Conway's conduct, that much as you love her you would not marry her unless in a moment of madness. He will follow your lead readily."

"But suppose that Juliet ever discovered my share in this scheme?"

"She never will. You are as cowardly as a child. If you will only trust yourself to me all must go well; and being grateful she will learn to love you more than she now imagines she loves Mr. Vavasour."

"But," urged the young man, "what will the governor say to such an alliance? We have forgotten him."

"I have not; but my pleading, united to Juliet Conway's beauty, will change his turn of thought. He will be proud of so lovely and accomplished a daughter-in-law. Do you agree to my proposals?"

He stretched out his hand and grasped his sister's.

"You're a splendid ally and schemer. What a pity you are not a man! Really, Rana, I did not expect such generous support from you."

"That is hardly complimentary. Well, I'll go now and leave you to digest this matter at your leisure. *Au revoir!*" and she passed out of the room, a bright smile on her face.

Reaching her own, she leaned from the window, and indulged in a low rippling laugh.

"Poor Greville!" she whispered. "Poor fool to be so easily deceived!"

In her heart she despised him, but she meant to use him as her tool to forward her own ends and what she deemed her happiness; and having attained these things she told herself, with a bitter smile,—

"Greville shall never marry that girl whilst I live. The fool, to dream of such a *mesalliance!*"

The sunny days were on, and the Dimsdales were leaving Bath for Ilfracombe, but not before Rana had sown her seed carefully and insidiously, so that Juliet already found a difference in the manner of her acquaintances and employers, and Rana went away with a comparatively light heart.

Mark travelled with them, and found Miss Dimsdale the most intelligent and appreciative companion. He never forgot that flash of love in her eyes, and was careful not to exceed the limits of courtesy; but she did not despair.

One day, when he and Greville sat together the latter opened his mind with all apparent candour, and gave Mark to understand that under no circumstances would he marry Juliet Conway, although, indeed, he loved her beyond life, and second only to honour.

"And, may I ask," questioned Mark, moodily, "what has brought this great change in you? A week or two since you swore you would marry her despite all obstacles."

"Then I believed in her fully, but since I have had proofs of her frivolity and faithlessness; and my wife must be as Caesar's—with-out reproach."

Mark rose and leaned over the balcony.

"Poor girl!" he said, hoarsely, "it would have been better for her had she been born plain; she would have had fewer temptations. There are times when even I feel some doubt as to the truth of these rumours; when I am tempted to ask all may be as once it was—"

He broke off confusedly, but after a moment resumed.

"You did not know—I would not confess—that once I was very near to marrying her."

Greville started.

"How far back was that?"

"Two years; but, as you know, we met here as strangers. If you would spend the remainder of your days in peace and honour give her up."

Greville moved to Mark's side.

"Do you care for her still?"

"Yes," with fierce self-contempt, "and at times I should be as weak as water in her hands—a fool, a slave, a dolt! Drop the subject Dimsdale; it is unpleasant to me."

In October Mark left the Dimsdales without having proposed to Rana, but she did not despair, for he had promised to meet her, in the following December, at the house of a mutual friend. She was very anxious to return to Bath, and, once settled, she began to institute careful inquiries concerning Juliet.

To her great satisfaction she learned that the leaven of her malice was working well that her rival's pupils had dwindled down until she was scarcely able to support herself, and seriously meditated leaving her comfortable lodgings for others less expensive; that she now obtained no engagements for *soirées* and parties.

Rana's heart throbbed triumphantly as she heard these things, and she longed to see if trouble had marred Juliet's beauty, and so make her less desirable to the man who loved her. Her longing was speedily gratified, for driving one day through the park she saw a slender figure, not to be mistaken for any other, approaching her.

She bade the coachman drive more slowly that she might the better see the ravages, shame and pain had wrought on that lovely face. Juliet lifted her weary eyes, and met those cruelly bright grey ones, but she seemed scarcely to recognise their owner until she drew very near to the carriage.

Then a faint colour stole into the wasted cheeks, and she reared her head high. Rana leaned forward, and bent her fair, proud face upon the unfortunate girl; her red lips curved into a contemptuous smile, then she sank back among her cushions, luxuriating in her success. Juliet went on her way heavily, as if all things conspired to weary her; the hot, slow tears stung her heavy lids. She dashed them aside hastily, hating herself for her weakness.

"It is she who has wrought me all this wrong and trouble," she thought, bitterly. "Oh! that she may suffer one day as now I do. Mark! Mark! had you been less weak! Oh! surely my story should have moved you to pity, but never to scorn!"

When December came Juliet took her life in her hands, as it were, and faced her future with the calmness of despair. She had been reduced to many straits, had even parted with most of her simple ornaments that she might not incur any debts. She was woefully alone, and even Mrs. Addison seemed to fail her; she was over-ruled by her son, who sat in



judgment on Juliet, and believed any and every malicious lie concerning her. Perhaps the embryo divine did not forget her rejection of his own suit, and was glad to revenge himself upon her for what he deemed a slight. Mr. Dimsdale had been ailing some time and Rana found it impossible to leave home; but she felt no regret, for Mark had accepted Greville's invite to spend his Christmas with them, and she was busy selecting new and pretty toilettes, charming morning robes, tea-gown, and dresses for evening wear, for now her fate was to be put to the test, and in her heart she vowed she would win Mark's love, or would die.

On a dreary afternoon Juliet Conway walked homewards, filled with vague misgivings; determined, too, to find employment elsewhere. She felt very bitter, very reckless; ripe for any folly, any madness. Reaching her lodgings she went slowly upstairs, and sat down, resting her chin upon her hand. A heavy step on the stairs roused her somewhat from her lethargy, and then a knock at her door followed.

In answer to her "come in," George Addison entered with a frown upon his brow, and a malignant triumph in his usually dull eyes. Juliet did not rise to meet him, she merely bowed, and motioned him to a seat. There was that in her attitude so hopeless, so lonely, that another man's heart would have been touched to tenderest pity, but it was not so with George Addison.

At a glance he took in all her beauty, which not even her pallor or weariness, her plain attire, could mar, and he felt an added bitterness against her.

"This is unexpected," she said slowly, as he crossed the room and confronted her "pray be seated."

"No," he answered, grimly. "I prefer standing; my errand is an unpleasant one."

The girl smiled bitterly.

"Mr. Addison is so inseparably connected with the disagreeables of life, that I feel no surprise. Please tell me at once what has procured me the honour of a visit from you? I regret that I cannot call it a pleasure."

His face grew pale with rage, as her lovely, defiant eyes met his, and the insolence of her tone vibrated through the otherwise silent room.

"Is it well to mock?" he began; "unhappy, sinful woman?"

She laughed, so softly, yet so bitterly, that his eloquence was nipped in the bud, and a most unrighteous anger stirred in his soul.

"Miss Conway," he said, "I have heard with grief of your frivolity, and I refuse to countenance it by allowing you longer to stay in my house."

Juliet rose suddenly; there was awful shame and agony on her face, and yet scorn was the dominant expression there. She lifted her hand as she spoke,—

"Tell me what you mean, George Addison?"

"There is little need for that," abashed by her demand. "You have made yourself a byword in Bath, and I refuse to allow so honest a woman as my mother to give you shelter any longer!"

One moment Juliet seemed about to fall, but the next she stood erect, and said to him:

"I wish," she said, hardly above a whisper, "that for an instant I could be a man! I would strike you down where you stand, you pitiful coward! I will go, but not until the time for which I hired these rooms has expired. If it hurts your immaculate and sinless soul to see me here day after day I am satisfied. You have heaped insult upon insult upon a defenceless girl; one day you will regret it. Leave me alone! Go from this room! It is yet mine; and do not venture here again. Oh! you make me forget my sex! You tempt me to say words I would fain leave unsaid."

"Juliet Conway, you will bring trouble upon yourself by your own violence, and shame by your frivolity. As a minister, I

warn you of what must be your fate if you continue—"

She interrupted him with a half shriek, and leapt to his side, her face changed and marred by outraged pride and womanly dignity.

She seized him by the wrists. He had not thought those small thin hands could be so strong.

"Be careful," she said, "you are goading me to madness; there is murder in my heart now. Oh! you poltroon! you wretched semblance of a man! a Christian! Go! If you enter this room again, on any pretence, so long as I remain here, you will regret it always."

Then she flung aside his hands, faced him a moment with flashing eyes, then pointed to the door.

"Do you hear?" she questioned, laughing "go!"

And the discomfited young man went from the room in angry silence.

Juliet listened to his heavy step as he descended the stairs, and when she could no longer hear it, she sank on her knees beside the couch, and hid her face in its crimson depths.

"Oh!" she moaned, "they are all alike; in this world there is no room for me! Why cannot I die? Why was I born with such a fatal gift of beauty? If I had been a plain girl they would have let me go on my way unmolested, unquestioned! Oh! that I had never seen the light of day! Heaven is very cruel to me!"

She remained kneeling a long time; then she rose. The room was very dark, and she rang for lights. The little maid answered her summons.

"Tell Mrs. Addison I wish to see her," said Juliet; "or, stay, you can take her a note. I am scarcely in the mood to receive her courteously."

She scribbled a few lines, intimating that she wished to vacate her apartments in the course of ten days, and Mrs. Addison had best endeavour to secure a fresh lodger in her stead.

The latter tried very hard to convey her sympathy to the unhappy girl, but Juliet sternly repulsed her.

"You are being governed by your son, and will cast me out of the shelter of your home; consequently I consider your professed sympathy of little worth. Let me alone; I ask nothing of you."

And not all Mrs. Addison's tears could move her to a tenderer mood.

She resolved to leave Bath; she hated its streets and lanes, all its pleasant ways; and so sought to gain employment elsewhere.

She advertised, so far as her means would allow, and kept herself aloof from all, careless of praise or censure.

And so the last day of her stay at Mrs. Addison's came; and she had taken lodgings in a far humbler neighbourhood.

As she went slowly along Queen's-square she heard steps behind her, and a voice that spoke her name.

She turned abruptly.

"Mr. Dimsdale," she said, swiftly, "why do you pursue me? Do you not know how sorely I have suffered because of my intimacy with you? My fair fame is injured, my occupation gone, my acquaintances have failed in their professions of attachment. There is nothing left me but to die or leave this hateful place. Do not persecute me further, for my patience and forgiveness have long been exhausted."

It was growing rapidly dark. The young man slid his hand in her arm and walked on beside her.

"Juliet," he said, "will you marry me? You know I have loved you long and truly."

"Do you mean this?" she questioned.

"Have you forgotten the difference in our positions?—the cloud under which I live?—the contempt in which my name is held? Give me time for thought. I am amazed,

almost frightened, by your love and generosity."

Her heart beat fast. The temptation to take him at his word was very, very great. She was homeless, friendless, unloved by any save this man, who alone, of all she had known, trusted and clung to her. But the memory of Mark was with her, and after a pause she said,—

"Tell me, will Mr. Vavasour marry your sister?"

"Yes," he answered, lying easily; "they have been engaged some weeks."

The small, shabbily-gloved hand stole to her side and rested there. Then she said in a thin, weary voice,—

"It will be a suitable match," and well-nigh broke into weeping.

"You have not given me my answer," pleaded Greville.

She lifted her bowed head, and looked into his eager face.

"You don't know all, or you would not ask me to be your wife. I am a wail, a pariah, wholly unfit to share your lot. No, no; I cannot marry you. I shall never marry, but for the honour you have done me I thank you with all my heart. I understand how much you would have sacrificed had I said 'yes' to your entreaty," and in her passionate gratitude she lifted his hand and kissed it, not knowing how it had been raised against her happiness and fame.

"I will not accept your answer as final. Juliet, let me at least hope. Could you read my heart, could you guess ever so faintly what you are to me, your pity would make you pause."

"The woman who hesitates is lost," she interrupted, swiftly. "Do not urge this upon me. If I said 'yes' you would one day wish I had answered otherwise. You love me now, or you would not have done me this honour, but love does not last"—half laughing, in her bitterness of soul—"at least a man's love does not."

They were in a quiet lane, there was no one to witness his passion or her pain, so he caught her in his arms and kissed her madly.

"Love lives for ever," he panted, "such love as I bear you. Juliet, you shall listen. Oh, my dearest! don't you know you have so grown into my life that you seem its very breath. I cannot do without you; and surely, seeing that you are so precious to me, you will relent. I can make you happy, and lift you to a higher level. My father may at first be disappointed, but he will not forbid our marriage. Rana will plead with him for us."

Then she laughed outright.

"Miss Dimsdale posing as my mediator would be as novel as the idea is funny. She always hated me."

"She misjudged you once," Greville said, quickly; "but she has long been your champion, and is eager to see us happy in each other's love."

"That she may secure Mr. Vavasour!" with great acumen. Then, understanding she had in her momentary madness revealed part of her secret, Juliet added swiftly, "Why do you regard me so curiously? Are you surprised to find Mark Vavasour and I were no strangers when you introduced us? Once we were all but acknowledged lovers, but he grew weary of me, as gentlemen will."

"Is it for his sake you refuse to listen to me?" Greville questioned, with suppressed fury.

"Perhaps so, who knows? We women are queer creatures."

"I give you one more chance, Juliet. Will you marry me?"

"No, I won't," she answered, sharply, for his tone stirred her to anger.

He flung her aside, so that she fell against the wall, and remained leaning there some minutes, sick and faint with pain.

"I only I am willing and able to repair your damaged fame, and make you an honest woman," Greville said, in furious tones.

"Rather than see you another man's wife I would murder you, despite your beauty. Think what you are doing. There is probably no other man in my position who would be willing to marry you."

Juliet lifted herself erect, her face was white, her eyes flashed ominously.

"Mr. Dimadale, you have said enough to convince me I was right to reject your extremely generous offer. It is well that I did so. It would be sad for me, indeed, to marry such a ruffian as you have proved yourself to be. Had you not best leave me now? Your attentions might be misconstrued, and it is not wise that so mere a youth should be exposed to the wiles of a woman who is not honest!"

The bitter irony of her tone, the implacable scorn and hatred on her face, recalled him to himself.

"Forgive me; I was mad," he pleaded.

But Juliet waved him away.

"There is no need to prolong our interview, and my most fervent wish is that I may never see you again. I shall never forgive you. You have insulted me too deeply either for forgetfulness or pardon."

She began to move on, and he followed. She flashed upon him.

"Must I beg protection of any passer-by? You would do well to let me go in peace. I am a desperate woman!"

He stood aside, and let her pass on her way alone; then returning to Royal-crescent cursed himself loudly for the arrogance and folly which had made Juliet his enemy.

"Rana would have managed better," he thought, and went to her to disclose all his wooing and its utter failure.

After that he saw no more of Juliet, although he often wandered through Queen's-square; and it came upon him with a great shock when Rana told him she had left Bath, having obtained employment as pianist in a theatrical company, at a very fair rate of remuneration. Still he swore that he would find her, and win her for his wife.

He was not a generous or good man in any sense, but he really loved Juliet with all the force of his selfish nature, and knew that no other woman would be to him what she was.

December passed, and Mark Vavasour spent his Christmas with the Dimadales, and listened to many hints as to the frailty of Juliet Conway, and almost believed them; still he said no word of love to Rana, and she began to despair. She was so gentle, so pretty in all her ways towards him, that he believed her the very embodiment of amiability, and sometimes resolved to make her his wife; but always his courage failed him, and he could not bring his resolution into action, because before his mental vision there would rise pleadingly, reproachfully, sometimes angrily, a pale, dark face, lit up with loveliest deep eyes; and he would hear the accents of a rich, low voice saying, "Had you been true, I had been a better woman; as it is, you have made me what I am."

So January and February passed, and the Dimadales went to town, Rana being still disengaged. Once again Mark was thrown into her society, but he showed less and less inclination to win her for himself, and she grew desperate; her temper became less even, her prettiness was marred by continual discontent and depression, so that the worldly matrons said, amongst themselves, with all her wealth Rana Dimadale would die an old maid.

Meanwhile Juliet Conway was rapidly growing popular in the musical and theatrical world; and Mark listened with growing wonder to accounts of her marvellous skill as a musician, and her coldness towards all her admirers. It seemed to him she wished to retrieve her past errors, and he muttered, miserably,—

"Oh, that she had been less frail! Why cannot I forget her? And why must her parting words ring always in my ears? They had the sound of truth."

Then he determined to go and hear her per-

formance, to look once more on the beauty which had been his doom (as then he thought), and as he listened and gazed the old love increased until its strength was a very torture to him.

"I could forget her mysterious antecedents, could afford to laugh even at her probably disgraceful birth, but I cannot forget her frivolity," and with that thought he went wearily out.

#### CHAPTER IV.

THE Princess Bronislava, most beautiful of Polish women, despite her forty years, sat listening indifferently to the sprightly words and music of a new opera. The house was full, the company good; but the lady's eyes wandered from face to face as if always seeking some friend whom she was destined never to find.

It so happened that, on this particular night, one of the actresses had fallen ill, and her small, unimportant part had been offered Juliet Conway. As her first tones broke the silence (she did not appear until the third scene), the Princess started, and looked quickly towards the stage; then her whole manner changed. With a low, wild cry she fell forward, senseless. For a time there was a great disturbance and confusion whilst her friends conveyed her from the theatre, then all was quiet again whilst the opera went on.

The Princess was whisked to her own home, and, having recovered consciousness, requested that the youngest of her friends, a pretty girl of twenty, should go to her in her boudoir.

"My dear," she said, feverishly, "tell me the name of the girl who began to sing when I fainted?"

"She was announced as Bertha Doneval," answered the girl.

The Princess sighed, averted her face, then said,—

"But it is a common custom with people of her profession to assume a name."

"Oh, yes! Why are you so anxious concerning her?"

"Her face is the face of my dead husband. Her voice had a ring in it like to his; for one wild moment I hoped, I dreamed she was my lost child. Audrey, I must see her, and speak with her; she must be brought to me! tomorrow."

"Dear madam, it shall be as you wish, only remain quiet now; and Heaven grant, if this girl is as good as she is lovely, she may, indeed, be your child. Good-night, and all happiness be with you."

It was a dull morning when Juliet found her way to the Princess Bronislava's boudoir house. She entered, not without some trepidation, and wondering greatly what the lady could have in common with her. There stirred, too, in her heart a faint hope that she was to learn something of her mysterious parentage.

She was escorted to an elegant boudoir, where, surrounded by every luxury, lay a lovely lady with a most sad but expectant face. Juliet bowed, and the Princess motioned her to a seat beside her couch.

"Are you Bertha Doneval?" she asked, gently, and Juliet noticed that her thin hands fluttered agitatedly from throat to breast.

"No, madam," she answered, quietly; "but I performed in her stead last evening. My name is Juliet Conway."

The Princess half rose, stretched out her hands with a mute, imploring gesture, then controlled herself sufficiently to say,—

"Are your parents alive?"

"I do not know," Juliet answered, flushing hotly. "I am ignorant of my origin. Pray pardon me if I beg you not to approach the subject. It is a very painful one to me," and the proud lip quivered with mortification.

"Naturally, child; but if I said I could tell you all you wish to know, if I proved that I—sit down, and disclose what you can of your past."

"Oh!" the girl cried, "do not excite vain

hopes in my heart; do not teach me to believe myself of honourable birth, only to let me learn afterwards I am the miserable dupe of some deception."

"Trust me, I shall not do that," and impelled by her manner to obey her, Juliet told the princess all she knew of her antecedents. Once or twice the lady interrupted with a sound that was suspiciously like a sob, and when the girl had finished she lay silent a time.

"Oh, by all your womanliness, do not keep me in suspense," the girl pleads.

Then the worn but lovely face was turned upon her, with a look she could not fathom.

"Listen patiently," she said, and her voice, though broken, was full of a great, deep joy. "From the moment I saw you I felt you were my—I mean the girl I sought. You look amazed. Give me your hand, child; and now—now hear me. Your mother was a Polish lady of rank, and she married—(much against her friends' wishes)—a young Englishman, at that time attached to the Polish Court; in fact, so prejudiced against the match were her parents that she eloped with her lover, and was married secretly. He was poor, but a gentleman, and his name was Norbert Conway. He had no living relatives. The young couple were very happy, despite their comparative poverty; and the wife did not grieve overmuch when news came of her mother's death, because another blessing had crowned her life—the advent of a girl-baby.

"Norbert Conway"—how tenderly she lingered over the name!—"obtained employment as a secretary to a nobleman at Versailles, and all went well with the little family until the husband was stricken down with cholera, and died. The unhappy young widow almost lost her reason, and for a long time lie ill upon her bed. Then her father went to her, and proposed that she should return with him to her old home.

"At first she resisted; but when she asked for her child, and they told her it had died its father's death, she struggled no more, but returned to her friends a broken-hearted, apathetic woman.

"It soon transpired that her father intended using her to gratify his own ambition—he did all in his power to compass a marriage between her and an old suitor whom she hated with all the force of her nature. She was so persistent in her refusal to listen to him that his love turned to hate, and he vowed to be revenged upon her and her family.

"Her father was a member of a secret society, and he contrived to have him arrested on the charge of conspiracy. He brought proofs of his statement, and the result was that Humbert Bronislava was condemned to twelve years' imprisonment.

"He was so bitter against his unhappy daughter that through all those twelve years he refused to see her; but when he was set at liberty he was so frail, so desolate, that he was glad to have her companionship, so they travelled to France, where they lived for twelve months.

"Then he fell ill, and, knowing the end was near, could not die with the secret of thirteen years on his soul; so he called his daughter to him, and confessed the great wrong he had done her. How, hoping to teach her forgetfulness of Norbert Conway, he had taken away her child, and placed her at a school at Colchester. That for five years he had paid for her education and maintenance; but that when he was thrown into prison for his daughter's fault (as he chose to consider it) he swore to do no more for the child whose name he hated, and never to disclose that she yet lived.

"After that confession he died, and, having buried him, Drisa Conway came to England to find her child. She went at once to the school where you had been placed; but it was closed, the principal dead, Juliet Conway had left. You were traced to Rochester; then all further clue was lost, and it is only by a great Providence I saw you last night."



Her eyes shone through a mist of tears, her breath came fast. Juliet fell on her knees beside her.

"Tell me," she implored, agitatedly, "who are you?"

The Princess broke into joyful sobs.

"I am Drisa Bronislava, Norbert Conway's widow, and your mother. Child!—oh, my child! is not your heart moved towards me? Love me a little, if but for the sake of my long suffering! Kiss me! Ah! how I have hungered for this hour!"

Juliet lifted her head.

"Leave me to myself a moment. It seems this great good news is not for me, that I should stand unblushingly before the world." Then with sudden passion, "Oh, mother! mother! mother! hold my hand in yours, touch me that I may know it is not a dream."

She bent suddenly and kissed her mother's cheek.

"Oh, you have suffered," she said, with passionate pity. "Your pain has far exceeded mine; but I will try to recompense you for all that."

Then they wept together for very joy; but when they were calmer the girl said, flushing deeply,—

"Let me tell you all that has happened since I left Colchester. You ought to know. Perhaps others will tell you."

And she proceeded to tell of her persecutions at Bath, until the mother caught her close, laughing and crying over her so long-lost treasure, and speaking in fierce indignation of those who had made Juliet's life such a burden to be borne.

"But," she added, "who is this Mark Vavasour of whom you speak? Ah, child! child, have you already given your heart? Then indeed I have found you but to lose you again!"

"No, no!" growing pale again. "I have more to tell you. When I arrived at the Washingtons I thought it only right to acquaint my employer with the mystery that surrounded me. She heard me patiently and even kindly, and never referred to the subject until the night before I left Rochester. Some time previous to my doing so Mark Vavasour, a gentleman of birth and fortune, came to visit Mrs. Washington, who was anxious to secure him for her sister. But from the first he paid court to me, and I was foolish enough to be glad, and oh! mother, the shame of it."

"I learned to love him, and was mad enough to think that he loved me. By every means in his power he strove to win my heart. I was so young and credulous that I believed him implicitly, and gave myself up to the happiness which was so great that at times I could scarcely distinguish it from pain. Then there came a day when we wandered about the gardens together, and Mark kissed me. We neither spoke a word, but I clung about him, and he could not know I loved him. We were startled by one of Mrs. Washington's visitors, and parted hurriedly; I going into the house, and to my room."

"I did not go down again until that night, when Mrs. Washington summoned me to the library. By the change in her face I knew something unpleasant had occurred. She did not leave me long in suspense as to the nature of my trouble. She said she had seen with great pain my efforts to entangle Mr. Vavasour. She regretted that he should have acted foolishly and inconsiderately; the more so, that on the previous day he had proposed to her sister and been accepted; that impressed with a sense of his own folly he had confided in her, and the result was that he had left the house for a time; and she must request me to do the same, as she could no longer retain the services of one so imprudent as I."

"Half broken-hearted I received a quarter's salary in lieu of a quarter's notice, and started the next day for Bath, where life went on evenly enough until I became acquainted with the Dimsdales. Last July I saw Mark driving in the park with them. He did not acknowledge me then, but afterwards he sought me

out, and spoke very harshly of my previous conduct, casting all the blame upon me."

"Did he marry the other woman, my dearest?"

"No; it was rumoured that he would marry Rana Dimsdale. Mrs. Washington's sister died shortly after I left her."

"And are you sure you did well to accept Mrs. Washington's statement?"

"It must have been true, mother; Mark Vavasour left the house without seeing me or writing a message. Let us forget him, and be happy in our new life. Oh! kiss me again, that I may realise my joy," she clung to her mother then with sudden passion.

"You are very beautiful," she said, softly. "I love to look into your face."

Society papers were full of Juliet Conway's romantic history, and it was predicted by folks who had seen her that the long-lost daughter of Princess Drisa Bronislava (for she continued to be known by her maiden name) would be a great success. Mark Vavasour heard the news with very mingled feelings; he would probably meet the woman who was dear to him, as in long ago days. He must smile in her presence, and hide whatever pain he might feel.

"It is sad to reflect on her folly," he thought. "I wonder if her mother knows anything of her past? Juliet! Juliet! how happy we might have been!"

The news of her great, good fortune travelled down to Bath, and the kindly Mrs. Addison rejoiced, whilst her son wished heartily he had been a little more tolerant to his mother's lovely and distinguished lodger.

The former received a very substantial token of Juliet's gratitude, which she was extremely proud of showing to any and every visitor as "a present from Miss Juliet, the loveliest of ladies, and daughter to a Princess with an outlandish name."

One night Mark met the Dimsdales at the house of a mutual friend, and could not but observe the change in Rana. She looked worn and anxious, and showed her preference for him so openly that he felt somewhat disgusted, and seizing an early opportunity left her, and went into the conservatory.

He soon lost himself in thought, and was totally unconscious that Greville and his sister had entered and taken a seat close by him; he being well screened from view by gorgeous tropical plants. He was roused at last by hearing Juliet Conway's name spoken in Rana's voice, sharp and angry.

"Don't speak to me of Juliet Conway again, Greville. That girl has been the curse of my existence!"

Not wishing to hear more Mark half rose, when some words of Greville arrested his attention.

"You were sure that your plots against her would succeed, that eventually I should win my wife; but it seems to me that if we had been straightforward in our dealings with Vavasour and Juliet, we should have been happier than now. We took away her fair name, and yet she was too proud to shelter herself under mine. Now she can afford to laugh at my advances, and punish me for my insolence."

"Is not my lot harder than yours? Look incredulous if you will; it is I who have toiled early and late to win Mark Vavasour's love, I who have plotted and planned until my heart and brain are both weary, and with what success you know."

Mark stepped forward, his face curiously distorted, and seeing him Rana uttered a low, sharp cry, whilst Greville confronted him moodily.

"What have you heard?" he questioned, whilst his sister hid her eyes.

"Enough to make me believe there has been some plot against Miss Conway's peace and reputation. You must speak out now, Dimsdale, or I'll make you!" There was brooding menace on his face and in his voice.

"There is no need for force," Greville retorted, swiftly. "I am glad to confess my share in the matter, and can only beg you to be merciful to my sister; as for me I deserve to be whipped like a hound. I loved the girl, I would have married her, but she would not listen to me. I was furiously jealous of you, and did my best to poison your mind against her, to teach the worthy people of Bath to think lightly of her, hoping that when she found herself alone and in poverty she would instinctively turn to me. Listen a few minutes, and I will tell you all," and he went on to relate the plot against Juliet, and how skilfully it had been carried out.

And Rana only crouched lower and lower, feeling Mark's eyes, terrible with anger, were upon her. When Greville ceased, however, she lifted her head defiantly.

"I am more to blame than he. I planned all. I did more by innuendoes and glances in a month than a man could do in a year." She broke off suddenly, and grasped her skirts with both hands as though she feared to lose her self-control.

"Tell me why you did this thing?" Mark asked, stormfully.

"Because I loved you. Oh! do not start as if surprised; you guessed it long ago, and if there were any hope of winning your affection I would stick at nothing. But lies are useless, so I tell you the plain, unvarnished truth. It sounds ugly does it, not?" and she laughed recklessly. "Now, what will you do in the matter?"

"You," said Mark, contemptuously, "I spare because of your sex; and as for you, Greville Dimsdale, you were once my friend, and so, although you have probably spoiled my life I will take no such revenge as a man might well do in my case."

He turned away; Greville held out his hand.

"Will you shake hands, Vavasour?"

"You ask too much," coldly. "I am not quite so easily appeased."

"I know I should not expect it, and yet I should have been glad. Understand, you are at liberty to make what use you choose of my confession, but spare Rana?"

"I will do so as far as I can."

He moved towards the entrance of the conservatory; there the wretched woman stayed him by a gesture.

"You will go to the girl you love, and whose truth you doubted; whom you were too proud to marry when she was lowly, and may she show you the mercy your folly and pride deserve. Good-bye, you carry my best wishes with you." Then she sank upon the seat and sobbed, "I love him. Oh! fool that I am, I love him!"

Juliet sat alone in her boudoir, an open letter in her hand. Prosperity seemed to have developed all the good qualities in her, which adversity had threatened to kill or dwarf. Her manner was gentler, more gracious than in the old days at Bath; the line of her lips less scornful, the expression of her eyes less severe.

Already between mother and daughter there was perfect confidence and sympathy, and it seemed the happiness of her latter days would atone to the Princess for the misery of her early life.

It was a bright April morning, and the sun shone in through the open windows of the boudoir which mother-love had made so beautiful; the hangings were of palest pink and silver; costly china, glittering lustres, and choice flowers made it appear like a scene from fairy-land, and yet its owner sat in the midst of all this luxury and beauty with sad face, and tearful, longing eyes.

The letter she held was closely written and covered two sheets of creamy paper. It was in a man's handwriting, and Juliet's heart throbbed passionately as she read and re-read the words Mark had written.

It was an informal epistle, but instinctively she knew what made it so, and forgave him

all his wrong even before she had concluded her personal.

"There was a time when I misjudged you sorely, and believed implicitly the idle tales I heard; I told myself then that you were utterly false and undeserving the love of any true man. I endeavoured to suppress my passion for you, but vainly, and meeting you at Sydney Gardens a power that was stronger than I compelled me to address you. I will not rehearse what followed, but your words led me to believe you boasted of what I thought your shame. Some of your sayings were incomprehensible to me then, as they are now, but I have learned, too late, how mad I was, and how injured you were."

"I have debated in my own mind for several days if it were wise to address you, to recall myself in any way to your memory, and have arrived at the conclusion that it is my duty to acquaint you with facts that have recently come to my knowledge."

"Knowing your nature better now than in those dead days, for which I now long vainly, I am assured you will not use my words for any purpose of revenge. Those who poisoned my mind and hardened my heart against you were Rana and Greville Dimsdale, for their own vile ends. Accidentally I discovered this; and, perhaps, it will make you happier to know that the world in which you moved now accepts you for what you were and are; looks on you as a martyr in those days."

"Now let me confess my sin against you. Recall for a moment that July night at Rochester, when I kissed you for the first time. I entered the house, you will remember, alone, and was met by Mrs. Washington, who freely confessed she had seen us in the garden, and deplored what she termed my imprudence. I retorted hotly; but she bore with me with what I now think suspicious patience; and when I had ended told me quietly enough that she could not allow me to ruin myself whilst under her roof; that you were a foundling, and had lived many years by charity."

"She was a keen woman, and had discovered my greatest failing, which was an immense regard for good birth."

"For a few hours I recoiled from the thought of marriage with you, and left the house determining to return in a few days, when I had resolved on my course of conduct. In those few days I learned how much you were to me, and to ignore the facts of your birth. I returned to Rochester to make you my wife, but you had left, Mrs. Washington said, the morning following my departure, and there was a report that you did not go alone."

"I have no more to say. I do not wish to extenuate my conduct. I feel it is beyond defence; but I would to Heaven you were once again the poor and unknown governess that I might woo you in wiser and nobler fashion than before. Forgive me if you can, and pity me because I have laid waste my whole life by my mad folly and credulity."

"MARK."

Juliet looked up with tender eyes.

"He loves me still!" she murmured, "and is not that at all sufficient to teach me forgiveness? Oh! Mark, my dear! my dear! only try me; see if I will fail you in love or faith!"

They met at last at a brilliant ball, and the hostess led Mark to the beauty of the evening. She was called away suddenly, and did not notice his confusion or the swift blush on Juliet's face, the glad light of love in her eyes.

"Won't you speak to me, Mark?" she questioned, in a low voice.

His face was livid with suppressed passion; his tones hoarse when he answered, heavily,—"What can I say to you? I cannot hope for forgiveness, and of love I dare not think. Come on to the balcony, and let me make my peace."

They went out together.

"Tell me," he said, looking down upon her lovely face, with eyes of hungering love, "in the future will you learn to think less harshly of me?"

"I have not one bitter thought or angry feeling in my heart," she whispered, swiftly.

Then, as he took her hands, her head dropped low.

"Mark, do you love me still?"

"More than life. But of what use is my love?" bitterly. "Don't torture me."

"If I said I loved you, Mark, and could only be happy with you; if I said I would give up all for your sake, and—oh! Mark, don't you see?" half sobbing.

"My darling! my wife!" he cried, and caught her close.

There was a long silence; then Juliet lifted her face, and said, as she caressed his cheek with one hand,—"You silly, silly boy! why did you not trust me more? You should have known that a woman loving once loves always. Listen a moment, my dearest:—"

"Oh! leave me not, I love but thee. Blessing or curse, which e'er thou be. Oh! be as thou hast been to me."

For ever and for ever."

GREVILLE DIMSDALE sailed for America the following month, and Rana withdrew from the world she once had loved. But Mark and his wife have settled down to a life of love, which Juliet says will last beyond the grave—for ever and for ever!

[THE END.]

## FACETIE.

QUESTION FOR DRESSING: CLERICS.—Can a man, while asleep, in the daytime, have the night-mare? Since we have had a lecture on the

ANGELINA: "The man I marry must be handsome, brave, and clever!" Tompkins: "Dear me, how fortunate we have met!"

HIS OCCUPATION GONE.—Lady (whispering to her neighbour): "No, I cannot do with these large parties, you don't know whom to talk about when everybody's there."

WHEN DOCTOR WENDALL HOLMES's brother John was advised to take a wife and live in a better house, he said he presumed, if he should get a better half, he would be sure of better quarters.

AT a Sunday-school a teacher asked a new scholar—a little girl—what her name was. She replied: "Helen French." An arch in an adjoining seat sang out: "What is it in English?"

AN IRISHMAN having been challenged to fight a duel, declined in the following terms:—"Sir,—Shure you wouldn't have me lave your mother an orphan."

LOVERS' TROTH.—"What makes you cry so, Katherine?" "Can I help it, your reverence? My Jockels has had to join the Uhlans." "Come, don't fret, he'll come back again in three years, you know." "Eh, but I shall have got another long before then!"

A WELL-KNOWN Boniface in a northern county had a goose presented to him for his Christmas dinner. On going into the pantry on Christmas morning, he found that "the bird had flown." He suspected three jovial friends, one of whom afterwards, sympathising with him, said, "it was only a lark." "Lark be hanged!" said he; "it weighed ten pounds!"

"THAT my client was driven to commit the offence from sheer necessity is plainly seen in the fact that he only took the trifling amount of cash which was in the drawer, whilst leaving untouched the purse with notes to the value of £200, which was lying close by." Judge: "Prisoner at the bar—But what are you crying for?" Prisoner (sobbing): "Because I didn't see the purse!"

A DELICATE PARCEL.—A lovely young woman wrapped up in herself.

A WRITER on dress says: "short and podgy women ought not to wear belts." What's the use of giving advice in that way? There isn't a woman in the world who would admit, even to herself, that she was "short and podgy."

DOCTORS sometimes use ambiguous language otherwise than in their prescriptions. For example, one writes to a friend from a well-known health-resort: "I am terribly busy; but I hope to finish off all my patients in about a fortnight, and shall then take a good holiday."

LOVE'S LABOUR LOST.—In recent elections at Brussels, the wives of members of one party entered freely into the contest. One of these ladies, after expending in buying what she did not need a considerable sum of money in a shop, said to the mistress, "your husband will, of course, vote for M.—?" The proprietress, with eyes cast down, replied, "Alas, Mlle. Baronne, I am a widow!"

A MAN went into the country last Sunday for a walk. He carried his overcoat on his arm, but finding it burdensome hung it on a fence. Taking a card from his pocket he wrote: "Do not touch this coat; infected with small-pox." He came back two hours later and found the card, upon which was written underneath his warning: "Thanks for the coat; I've had the small-pox."

A YOUNG LADY being very fussy about having her shoes small and neatly-fitting, her stern aunt said: "In my time the men looked at the women's faces instead of their feet!" "Ah, but, my dear aunt," retorted the pretty young lady, "you see that the world has improved, and is more civilised than it used to be—it looks now more to the understanding."

A COUNTRY apothecary, not a little distinguished for his impudence, with a hope of disconcerting a young clergyman, whom he knew to be a man of singular modesty, asked him in the hearing of a large company, "Why the patriarchs of old lived to such an extreme age?" To which the clergyman replied, "I suppose the ancient patriarchs took no physic."

A THIRD SOME PERSONS WOULD RETURN NOT HAVE SAID.—At an evening party Dumley was introduced to a young lady, and, after a remark about the weather, he said gallantly: "And have I really the pleasure of meeting the beautiful Miss Smith, whose praises are being sounded by everybody?" "Oh, no, Mr. Dumley," the lady replied; "the beautiful Miss Smith to whom you refer is a cousin of mine." "Oh, that's it! Well, I thought there must be a mistake somewhere," said the gallant Dumley.

## SHORT KAKE.

Yu kan tell an impure man bi the very breath that cums from his nostrils.

People ov grate musical talent kant pla much ov a tune on enny thing else.

It looks like a paradox to say that a man iz his own best friend and wust enemy, but almost enny one kan prove it.

I don't kno ov a single passion of the harte, however base it may be, but what in sum way iz necessary to the perfectshun ov man's nature.

Children are the autotraits ov the world—they enjoyed yesterday, and are now enjoying to-day.

PHILOSOPHERS tell us that the world iz any-where from ten to a hundred thousand years old. This is liberal guessing, but, like all other guessing, the man who makes the fast guess don't stand any chance at all. I put the age ov the world at thirty millions, and shall stik to it until sum kranks outguesses me.

Indolence paralyzes the body, eats the core out ov a man's soul, and wears out his clothes faster than day labour daz.

There iz nothing that will tire a man out, and the chair he sets in, so thoroughly az laziness.

I wonder if there iz antch a thing az an infidel woman? I never hav seen ons yet.

JOSE BILLINGS.



## SOCIETY.

**A ROYAL JUBILEE.**—June 27, 1886, when the Queen enters upon the fiftieth year of her reign, will be celebrated as the jubilee of Her Majesty's accession to the throne, and the Corporation of London, it is stated, are already contemplating arrangements for celebrating the occasion on a scale befitting its historic interest.

**THE PRINCESS OF WALES** has promised to open the new working ladies' institute, White-chapel-road, London, E., and has appointed Saturday, October 31, for the ceremony.

**THE DUCHESS OF ALBANY**, while staying at Balmoral, presented colours to the 3rd Battalion Seaforth Highlanders at Ballater. Fifty Highlanders, commanded by Colonel Macleay, went from Aberdeen to receive the colours. Her Royal Highness, who was accompanied by Sir R. and Lady Collins, said she was fulfilling one of her dear husband's wishes in making the presentation. He was proud of his connection with the Seaforth Highlanders, and neither she nor her children would ever forget the tie which bound them to the regiment. Colonel Macleay, in returning thanks, said the colours were the first the battalion had ever received. Her Royal Highness has also promised to lay the foundation-stone in May next of the new church which is to accommodate the congregation of the mission founded by Marlborough College in a newly-built artisan neighbourhood of Tottenham. The site has been paid for, and about half of the cost of the church is already defrayed.

**PRINCE LOUIS OF BATTENBERG's** future sphere of employment will be in connection with one of the Royal yachts. The Queen very justly does not approve of the separation of married couples, so that hereafter Prince Louis is to be employed exclusively on home service. Her Majesty's granddaughter and her husband, who derive the bulk of their income from their Royal relative, will be granted the use of the Villa Hohenlohe, Queen Victoria's residence at Baden-Baden, which has been for several years unoccupied.

**THE LITTLE daughter of the Duke and Duchess of Hamilton** has been presented by the people of the Isle of Arran with a handsome diamond and pearl necklace. Lady Mary Louise, the young heiress, was carried into Brodie's Castle hall by the Duke and Duchess, where the deputation were assembled, who were entertained to luncheon after the presentation.

**MISS CARON's** wedding dress on the occasion of her marriage with Lord Victor Seymour was of rich white satin, covered with old Chantilly lace, the train being adorned with bunches of ostrich feathers. The veil was fastened over sprays of orange blossoms with a cluster of diamonds. The ten bridesmaids wore dresses of cream canvas, trimmed with coffee lace, high-crowned hats *en suite*.

**NOVEL dresses** for such an occasion were those worn by the four bridesmaids of Miss Neville on the occasion of her recent marriage with Captain Stopford, R.N. They were composed of navy blue serge, with white waistcoats and gold buttons, sailor hats, and each wore a white enamelled and gold brooch, presented by the bridegroom. The bride was attired in a rich brocaded dress, trimmed with Brussels lace, and wore ornaments of diamonds and pearls.

**THE grape cure**, which the Empress Eugénie has been undergoing, is especially beneficial for liver complaints, from which her Majesty suffers. As many as sixteen pounds a day are taken by the patients. The chief grape-cure place is at Turckheim, near Worms.

**AN interesting masonic ceremony** took place a few days ago at Allos House the residence of the Earl of Mar, when the Countess was presented with a marble bust of her husband in recognition of his lordship's services in his capacity of Grand Master Mason of Scotland. A banquet followed the presentation.

## STATISTICS.

**SIXTEEN TELEGRAMS.**—When the private telegraph companies were transferred to the Government fifteen years ago the local London messages did not exceed 300 per day. They now number from 5,000 to 7,000. Future statistics will probably indicate a great augmentation of these totals. General telegrams hitherto dealt with daily at the central station have ranged between 45,000 and 65,000, but this number has been exceeded by nearly 40 per cent.

**THE NEW PARLIAMENT.**—Up to the 1st of October the total number who have already offered themselves, or been chosen by the various party associations in Great Britain is 1,106, of whom 907 have appeared in England, 53 in Wales, and 146 in Scotland; 487 Liberals, 418 Conservatives, and 2 Home Rulers (both for divisions of Liverpool), appear in England, 32 Liberals and 21 Conservatives in Wales, and 97 Liberals and 49 Conservatives in Scotland; 408 members of the expiring House seek election to the new Parliament for constituencies in Great Britain; 112 Liberal and 34 Conservative members ask re-election for the seats they now hold, such seats having been unaffected by the Redistribution Act; 98 Liberals and 104 Conservatives for their present seats as remodelled by that Act; and 41 Liberals, 22 Conservatives, and 2 Home Rulers for constituencies altogether unconnected with those for which they now sit—there thus being 246 Liberal and 160 Conservative members known to be seeking re-election.

## GEMS.

**SOME people** are like a boy's rocking-horse; full of motion, but no progress.

**A good girl**, like a good watch, is known by her works. Either of them may be really good without having a pretty face.

**WHETHER young or old**, think it neither too soon nor too late to turn over the leaves of your past life and consider what you would do if what you have done were to be done again.

**Idleness** is the mother of many wanton children; they that do nothing are in the ready way to do worse than nothing; it was not for nothing that we were called out of nothing.

## HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

**IT is said** that wood can be rendered unflammable by coating it with a preparation composed of a solution of potash thickened with clay.

**TO RESTORE GILT FRAMES.**—Whites of eggs, two ounces; chloride of potash or soda, one ounce; mix well; blow off the dust from the frames, then go over them lightly with a soft brush dipped in the mixture.

**SALLY LUNN.**—Sift into a pan one pound and a-half of flour; make a hole in the middle of it and put in two ounces of butter, warmed in a pint of sweet milk, a saltspoonful of salt, two eggs, well beaten, and two tablespoonfuls of the best brewer's yeast. Mix the flour well with the other ingredients, and bake it in a turban form, or bread-pan, well greased. It requires to be put to rise at three o'clock, in order to bake it at seven o'clock.

**TOMATO CATSUP.**—Slice the tomatoes, put a layer in a deep vessel, and sprinkle over some salt; then another layer of tomatoes and salt till all are in. Stand them in the sun for two or three days; when they are soft pass them through a sieve, and put the pulp, thus drained out, over the fire to boil. Add cayenne pepper, whole black pepper, mace, cloves, allspice, and a little ginger if you like; let it boil till it is thick, add a clove of garlic; by tasting it you can judge if it be seasoned to your taste. When cold, bottle it off; put a teaspoonful of sweet oil on the top of each bottle, and seal the corks.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

**A LAND OF THE DEAD.**—China, says a recent traveller, is almost everywhere a land of the dead. For thousands of years the natives have been assiduously employed in burying each other. In the north there are few graveyards, and the person who dies is placed in the most convenient spot which offers itself, and that may chance to be a field of rice or on the roadside. If his relatives be rich, they at once raise a huge mound of earth over him; if they do not happen to have a great amount of disposable funds they put the coffin down in the field or on the roadside, thatch it with a little straw, and leave it till the money or a mound can be got together; or they erect over it a little structure of loose brick and tiles. The wind and rain do their work, and so the traveller sees all over the landscape these mounds of earth flanked by exposed coffins. And yet, for the sustenance of life, every available foot of soil is sought for to be utilised.

**WARM CLOTHES.**—The most serious obstacle that the propagation of heat can encounter in a body is the discontinuity of its elements. In the manufacture of the various tissues destined to clothe us, these principles are profited by, more or less, unknowingly. Very warm clothes are obtained from stuffs that are light, spongy and loose, because they can contain a large volume of air in the interstices between the fibres. I said contain, but it would be more correct to have said, allow to pass. Indeed, the warm air that surrounds our bodies is not immovable; it is renewed by filtering through the coverings that we think are destined to isolate us from the surrounding medium. A condition that is essential for a good garment is that it allows of ventilation. The warmest stuffs allow the air to pass through them more freely than those that are considered the coolest. M. Pettenkofer has demonstrated the proof of this in measuring the volumes of air that passed through a series of tubes closed with different kinds of stuff, the same pressure and time being allowed for each kind of stuff. The following numbers will give an idea of their relative permeability:—Flannel, 100; linen, 58; silk, 49; heavy cloth, 58; buckskin, 51; glazed skin, 1.

**ENVELOPE MAKING.**—The process of manufacturing envelopes is apparently simple, although in reality complicated. True, there are only three distinct operations to be gone through with—the cutting, gumming and folding, but the blending of the last two operations into one makes necessary the use of a complex machine. There is nothing remarkable about the first part of the operation. The paper, as it comes from the factory, is cut in squares or diagonals measuring thirty or forty inches, special diagonal shapes being selected for certain cutting dies, in order to save the waste which would follow from the sheet not being especially adapted to the shape of the die. Each sheet will average thirteen envelopes, which are cut out by dies of innumerable sizes and shapes, but all verging on the diamond, five hundred sheets being placed on the press at a time. In spite of all precautions there is a waste of two pounds in every forty. The folding and gumming machines are now brought into use, and no more fascinating operation can be found for a while than to watch their lightning-like motions as they turn out finished envelopes at the rate of seventy-five a minute. Each of these machines needs no other attendant than a girl, who receives the envelopes as they are forced out, binds them and packs them into boxes. Six of the machines are used entirely for *gumettes*, five for gumming, folding, and printing at the same time, and the rest for plain commercial envelopes. The process is an interesting one, the machines being self-feeding, taking the paper direct from the cutters, and turning the completed envelopes to the packers in lots counted out to suit.

## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

**MINNE-TAR.**—The 6th January, 1880, was on a Monday.

**L. M.—Miss Mary Anderson** has just returned to America, and we cannot furnish you with her address.

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Where'er you are, believe I love you best.

Believe my heart is hungry for your coming;  
I could not say it were you went away,  
But my love follows you in all your roaming,  
And ever for your happiness I pray.

And when the silver moon is softly shining  
I watch her course across the purple skies,  
And wish her light, some mystic way divining,  
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And read the secret that your heart is holding;  
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PART 276. VOL. XLV.

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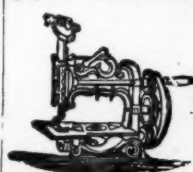
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